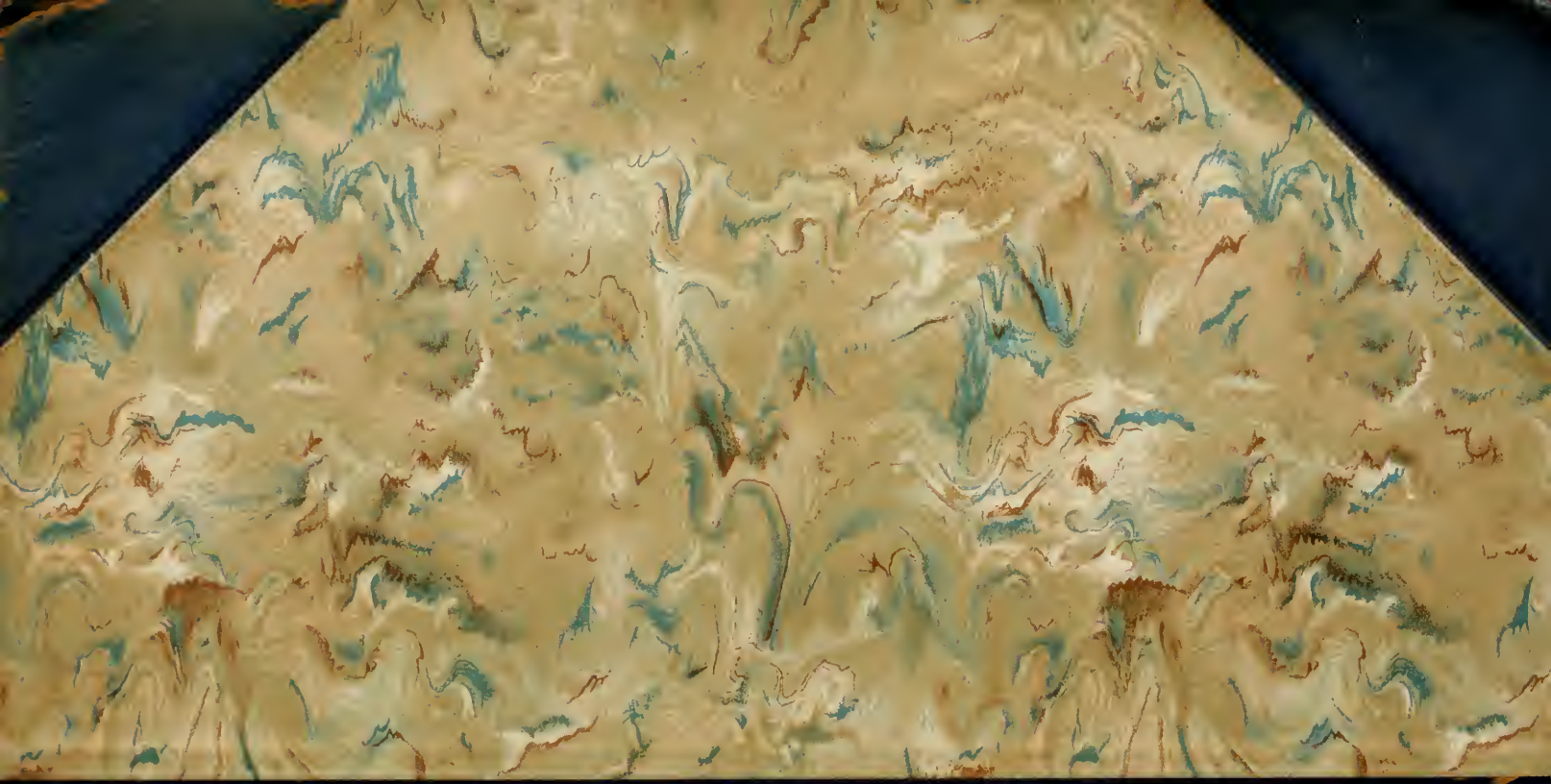

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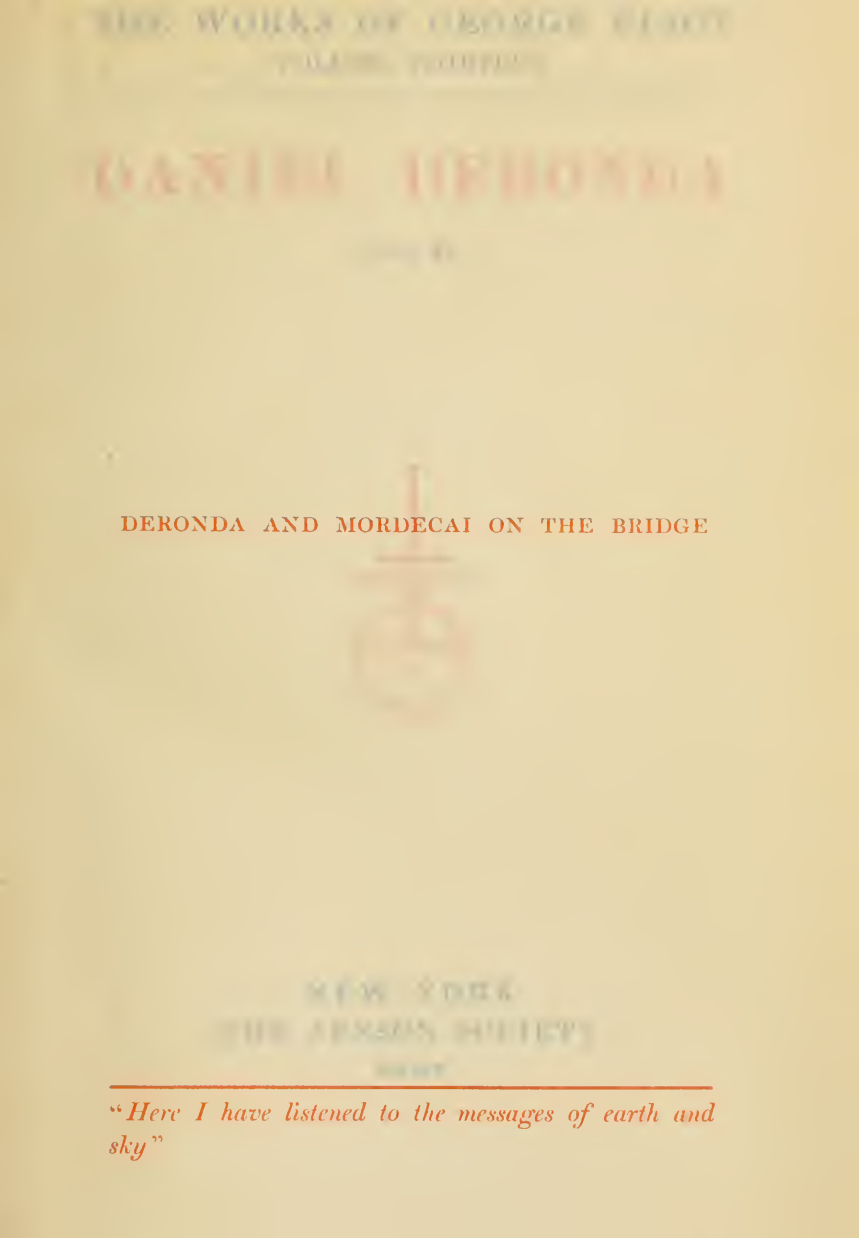

DERONDA AND MORDECAI ON THE BRIDGE

"Here I have listened to the messages of earth and sky"

THE WORKS OF GEORGE ELIOT

VOLUME THIRTEEN

DANIEL DERONDA

PART II.

NEW YORK
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Daniel Deronda

Book Three *(Continued)*

MAIDENS CHOOSING

CHAPTER VII

"How trace the why and wherefore in a mind reduced to the barrenness of a fastidious egoism, in which all direct desires are dulled, and have dwindled from motives into a vacillating expectation of motives; a mind made up of moods, where a fitful impulse springs here and there conspicuously rank amid the general weediness? 'T is a condition apt to befall a life too much at large, unmoulded by the pressure of obligation. *Nam deteriores omnes sumus licentiæ*, saith Terence; or, as a more familiar tongue might deliver it, '*As you like*' *is a bad finger-post.*"

POTENTATES make known their intentions and affect the funds at a small expense of words. So, when Grandcourt, after learning that Gwendolen had left Leubronn, incidentally pronounced that resort of fashion a beastly hole worse than Baden, the remark was conclusive to Mr. Lush that his patron intended straightway to return to Diplow. The execution was sure to be slower than the intention, and in fact Grandcourt did loiter through the next day without giving any distinct orders about departure, — perhaps because he discerned that Lush was expecting them: he lingered over his toilet, and certainly came

down with a faded aspect of perfect distinction which made fresh complexions, and hands with the blood in them, seem signs of raw vulgarity; he lingered on the terrace, in the gambling-rooms, in the reading-room, occupying himself in being indifferent to everybody and everything around him. When he met Lady Mallinger, however, he took some trouble, — raised his hat, paused, and proved that he listened to her recommendation of the waters by replying, "Yes; I heard somebody say how providential it was that there always happened to be springs at gambling-places."

"Oh, that was a joke," said innocent Lady Mallinger, misled by Grandcourt's languid seriousness, "in imitation of the old one about the towns and the rivers, you know."

"Ah, perhaps," said Grandcourt, without change of expression. Lady Mallinger thought this worth telling to Sir Hugo, who said, "Oh, my dear, he is not a fool. You must not suppose that he can't see a joke. He can play his cards as well as most of us."

"He has never seemed to me a very sensible man," said Lady Mallinger, in excuse of herself. She had a secret objection to meeting Grandcourt, who was little else to her than a large living sign of what she felt to be her failure as a wife, — the not having presented Sir Hugo with a son. Her constant reflection was that her husband might fairly regret his choice, and if he had not been very good might have treated her with some roughness in consequence, gentlemen naturally disliking to be disappointed.

Deronda, too, had a recognition from Grandcourt, for which he was not grateful, though he took care to return it with perfect civility. No reasoning as to the foundations of custom could do away with the early-rooted feeling that his birth had been attended with injury for which his father was to blame; and seeing that but for this injury Grandcourt's prospect might have been his, he was proudly resolute not to behave in any way that might be interpreted into irritation on that score. He saw a very easy descent into mean unreasoning rancour and triumph in others' frustration; and being determined not to go down that ugly pit, he turned his back on it, clinging to the kindlier affections within him as a possession. Pride certainly helped him well, — the pride of not recognizing a disadvantage for one's self which vulgar minds are disposed to exaggerate, such as the shabby equipage of poverty: he would not have a man like Grandcourt suppose himself envied by him. But there is no guarding against interpretation. Grandcourt did believe that Deronda, poor devil, who he had no doubt was his cousin by the father's side, inwardly winced under their mutual position; wherefore the presence of that less lucky person was more agreeable to him than it would otherwise have been. An imaginary envy, the idea that others feel their comparative deficiency, is the ordinary *cortège* of egoism; and his pet dogs were not the only beings that Grandcourt liked to feel his power over in making them jealous. Hence he was civil enough to exchange several words with Deronda on the terrace about the

hunting round Diplow, and even said, "You had better come over for a run or two when the season begins."

Lush, not displeased with delay, amused himself very well, partly in gossiping with Sir Hugo and in answering his questions about Grandcourt's affairs so far as they might affect his willingness to part with his interest in Diplow. Also about Grandcourt's personal entanglements, the baronet knew enough already for Lush to feel released from silence on a sunny autumn day, when there was nothing more agreeable to do in lounging promenades than to speak freely of a tyrannous patron behind his back. Sir Hugo willingly inclined his ear to a little good-humoured scandal, which he was fond of calling *traits de mœurs;* but he was strict in keeping such communications from hearers who might take them too seriously. Whatever knowledge he had of his nephew's secrets, he had never spoken of it to Deronda, who considered Grandcourt a pale-blooded mortal, but was far from wishing to hear how the red corpuscles had been washed out of him. It was Lush's policy and inclination to gratify everybody when he had no reason to the contrary; and the baronet always treated him well, as one of those easy-handled personages who, frequenting the society of gentlemen, without being exactly gentlemen themselves, can be the more serviceable, like the second-best articles of our wardrobe, which we use with a comfortable freedom from anxiety.

"Well, you will let me know the turn of events," said Sir Hugo, "if this marriage seems

likely to come off after all, or if anything else happens to make the want of money more pressing. My plan would be much better for him than burthening Ryelands."

"That 's true," said Lush, "only it must not be urged on him, — just placed in his way that the scent may tickle him. Grandcourt is not a man to be always led by what makes for his own interest; especially if you let him see that it makes for your interest too. I 'm attached to him, of course. I 've given up everything else for the sake of keeping by him, and it has lasted a good fifteen years now. He would not easily get any one else to fill my place. He 's a peculiar character, is Henleigh Grandcourt, and it has been growing on him of late years. However, I 'm of a constant disposition, and I 've been a sort of guardian to him since he was twenty: an uncommonly fascinating fellow he was then, to be sure — and could be now, if he liked. I 'm attached to him; and it would be a good deal worse for him if he missed me at his elbow."

Sir Hugo did not think it needful to express his sympathy or even assent, and perhaps Lush himself did not expect this sketch of his motives to be taken as exact. But how can a man avoid himself as a subject in conversation? And he must make some sort of decent toilet in words, as in cloth and linen. Lush's listener was not severe: a member of Parliament could allow for the necessities of verbal toilet; and the dialogue went on without any change of mutual estimate.

However, Lush's easy prospect of indefinite

procrastination was cut off the next morning by Grandcourt's saluting him with the question, —

"Are you making all the arrangements for our starting by the Paris train?"

"I did n't know you meant to start," said Lush, not exactly taken by surprise.

"You might have known," said Grandcourt, looking at the burnt length of his cigar, and speaking in that lowered tone which was usual with him when he meant to express disgust and be peremptory. "Just see to everything, will you? and mind no brute gets into the same carriage with us. And leave my P. P. C. at the Mallingers'."

In consequence they were at Paris the next day; but here Lush was gratified by the proposal or command that he should go straight on to Diplow and see that everything was right, while Grandcourt and the valet remained behind; and it was not until several days later that Lush received the telegram ordering the carriage to the Wanchester station.

He had used the interim actively, not only in carrying out Grandcourt's orders about the stud and household, but in learning all he could of Gwendolen, and how things were going on at Offendene. What was the probable effect that the news of the family misfortunes would have on Grandcourt's fitful obstinacy he felt to be quite incalculable. So far as the girl's poverty might be an argument that she would accept an offer from him now in spite of any previous coyness, it might remove that bitter objection to risk a repulse which Lush divined to be one of Grandcourt's deterring motives; on the other

hand, the certainty of acceptance was just "the sort of thing" to make him lapse hither and thither with no more apparent will than a moth. Lush had had his patron under close observation for many years, and knew him perhaps better than he knew any other subject; but to know Grandcourt was to doubt what he would do in any particular case. It might happen that he would behave with an apparent magnanimity, like the hero of a modern French drama, whose sudden start into moral splendour after much lying and meanness leaves you little confidence as to any part of his career that may follow the fall of the curtain. Indeed, what attitude would have been more honourable for a final scene than that of declining to seek an heiress for her money, and determining to marry the attractive girl who had none? But Lush had some general certainties about Grandcourt, and one was, that of all inward movements those of generosity were the least likely to occur in him. Of what use, however, is a general certainty that an insect will not walk with his head hindmost, when what you need to know is the play of inward stimulus that sends him hither and thither in a network of possible paths? Thus Lush was much at fault as to the probable issue between Grandcourt and Gwendolen, when what he desired was a perfect confidence that they would never be married. He would have consented willingly that Grandcourt should marry an heiress, or that he should marry Mrs. Glasher: in the one match there would have been the immediate abundance that prospective heirship could not supply, in the other there would have been

the security of the wife's gratitude, for Lush had always been Mrs. Glasher's friend; and that the future Mrs. Grandcourt should not be socially received could not affect his private comfort. He would not have minded, either, that there should be no marriage in question at all; but he felt himself justified in doing his utmost to hinder a marriage with a girl who was likely to bring nothing but trouble to her husband, — not to speak of annoyance if not ultimate injury to her husband's old companion, whose future Mr. Lush earnestly wished to make as easy as possible, considering that he had well deserved such compensation for leading a dog's life, though that of a dog who enjoyed many tastes undisturbed, and who profited by a large establishment. He wished for himself what he felt to be good, and was not conscious of wishing harm to any one else; unless perhaps it were just now a little harm to the inconvenient and impertinent Gwendolen. But the easiest-humoured amateur of luxury and music, the toad-eater the least liable to nausea, must be expected to have his susceptibilities. And Mr. Lush was accustomed to be treated by the world in general as an apt, agreeable fellow: he had not made up his mind to be insulted by more than one person.

With this imperfect preparation of a war policy, Lush was awaiting Grandcourt's arrival, doing little more than wondering how the campaign would begin. The first day Grandcourt was much occupied with the stables, and amongst other things he ordered a groom to put a side-saddle on Criterion and let him review the horse's paces. This marked indication of purpose set

Lush on considering over again whether he should incur the ticklish consequences of speaking first, while he was still sure that no compromising step had been taken; and he rose the next morning almost resolved that if Grandcourt seemed in as good a humour as yesterday and entered at all into talk, he would let drop the interesting facts about Gwendolen and her family, just to see how they would work, and to get some guidance. But Grandcourt did not enter into talk, and in answer to a question even about his own convenience, no fish could have maintained a more unwinking silence. After he had read his letters he gave various orders to be executed or transmitted by Lush, and then thrust his shoulders towards that useful person, who accordingly rose to leave the room. But before he was out of the door Grandcourt turned his head slightly, and gave a broken, languid "Oh!"

"What is it?" said Lush, who, it must have been observed, did not take his dusty puddings with a respectful air.

"Shut the door, will you? I can't speak into the corridor."

Lush closed the door, came forward, and chose to sit down.

After a little pause Grandcourt said, "Is Miss Harleth at Offendene?" He was quite certain that Lush had made it his business to inquire about her, and he had some pleasure in thinking that Lush did not want *him* to inquire.

"Well, I hardly know," said Lush, carelessly. "The family 's utterly done up. They and the Gascoignes too have lost all their money. It 's owing to some rascally banking business. The

poor mother has n't a *sou,* it seems. She and the girls have to huddle themselves into a little cottage like a labourer's."

"Don't lie to me, if you please," said Grandcourt, in his lowest audible tone. "It 's not amusing, and it answers no other purpose."

"What do you mean?" said Lush, more nettled than was common with him, — the prospect before him being more than commonly disturbing.

"Just tell me the truth, will you?"

"It 's no invention of mine. I have heard the story from several, — Bazley, Brackenshaw's man, for one. He is getting a new tenant for Offendene."

"I don't mean that. Is Miss Harleth there, or is she not?" said Grandcourt, in his former tone.

"Upon my soul, I can't tell," said Lush, rather sulkily. "She may have left yesterday. I heard she had taken a situation as governess; she may be gone to it, for what I know. But if you wanted to see her, no doubt the mother would send for her back." This sneer slipped off his tongue without strict attention.

"Send Hutchins to inquire whether she will be there to-morrow."

Lush did not move. Like many persons who have thought over beforehand what they shall say in given cases, he was impelled by an unexpected irritation to say some of those prearranged things before the cases were given. Grandcourt, in fact, was likely to get into a scrape so tremendous that it was impossible to let him take the first step towards it without re-

monstrance. Lush retained enough caution to use a tone of rational friendliness; still he felt his own value to his patron, and was prepared to be daring.

"It would be as well for you to remember, Grandcourt, that you are coming under closer fire now. There can be none of the ordinary flirting done, which may mean everything or nothing. You must make up your mind whether you wish to be accepted; and more than that, how you would like being refused. Either one or the other. You can't be philandering after her again for six weeks."

Grandcourt said nothing, but pressed the newspaper down on his knees and began to light another cigar. Lush took this as a sign that he was willing to listen, and was the more bent on using the opportunity; he wanted if possible to find out which would be the more potent cause of hesitation, — probable acceptance or probable refusal.

"Everything has a more serious look now than it had before. There is her family to be provided for. You could not let your wife's mother live in beggary. It will be a confoundedly hampering affair. Marriage will pin you down in a way you have n't been used to; and in point of money you have not too much elbow-room. And after all, what will you get by it? You are master over your estates, present or future, as far as choosing your heir goes; it 's a pity to go on encumbering them for a mere whim, which you may repent of in a twelvemonth. I should be sorry to see you making a mess of your life in that way. If there were any-

thing solid to be gained by the marriage that would be a different affair."

Lush's tone had gradually become more and more unctuous in its friendliness of remonstrance, and he was almost in danger of forgetting that he was merely gambling in argument. When he left off, Grandcourt took his cigar out of his mouth, and looking steadily at the moist end while he adjusted the leaf with his delicate finger-tips, said, —

"I knew before that you had an objection to my marrying Miss Harleth." Here he made a little pause, before he continued, "But I never considered that a reason against it."

"I never supposed you did," answered Lush, not unctuously, but dryly. "It was not *that* I urged as a reason. I should have thought it might have been a reason against it, after all your experience, that you would be acting like the hero of a ballad, and making yourself absurd, — and all for what? You know you could n't make up your mind before. It 's impossible you can care much about her. And as for the tricks she is likely to play, you may judge of that from what you heard at Leubronn. However, what I wished to point out to you was, that there can be no shilly-shally now."

"Perfectly," said Grandcourt, looking round at Lush and fixing him with narrow eyes; "I don't intend that there should be. I dare say it 's disagreeable to you. But if you suppose I care a damn for that, you are most stupendously mistaken."

"Oh, well," said Lush, rising with his hands in his pockets, and feeling some latent venom still

within him, "if you have made up your mind! — only there 's another aspect of the affair. I have been speaking on the supposition that it was absolutely certain she would accept you, and that destitution would have no choice. But I am not so sure that the young lady is to be counted on. She is kittle cattle to shoe, I think. And she had her reasons for running away before." Lush had moved a step or two till he stood nearly in front of Grandcourt, though at some distance from him. He did not feel himself much restrained by consequences, being aware that the only strong hold he had on his present position was his serviceableness; and even after a quarrel, the want of him was likely sooner or later to recur. He foresaw that Gwendolen would cause him to be ousted for a time, and his temper at this moment urged him to risk a quarrel.

"She had her reasons," he repeated, more significantly.

"I had come to that conclusion before," said Grandcourt, with contemptuous irony.

"Yes, but I hardly think you know what her reasons were."

"You do, apparently," said Grandcourt, not betraying by so much as an eyelash that he cared for the reasons.

"Yes, and you had better know too, that you may judge of the influence you have over her if she swallows her reasons and accepts you. For my own part, I would take odds against it. She saw Lydia in Cardell Chase, and heard the whole story."

Grandcourt made no immediate answer, and only went on smoking. He was so long before

he spoke that Lush moved about and looked out of the windows, unwilling to go away without seeing some effect of his daring move. He had expected that Grandcourt would tax him with having contrived the affair, since Mrs. Glasher was then living at Gadsmere, a hundred miles off, and he was prepared to admit the fact: what he cared about was that Grandcourt should be staggered by the sense that his intended advances must be made to a girl who had that knowledge in her mind and had been scared by it. At length Grandcourt, seeing Lush turn towards him, looked at him again and said contemptuously, "What follows?"

Here certainly was a "mate" in answer to Lush's "check;" and though his exasperation with Grandcourt was perhaps stronger than it had ever been before, it would have been mere idiocy to act as if any further move could be useful. He gave a slight shrug with one shoulder, and was going to walk away, when Grandcourt, turning on his seat towards the table, said, as quietly as if nothing had occurred, "Oblige me by pushing that pen and paper here, will you?"

No thunderous, bullying superior could have exercised the imperious spell that Grandcourt did. Why, instead of being obeyed, he had never been told to go to a warmer place, was perhaps a mystery to several who found themselves obeying him. The pen and paper were pushed to him, and as he took them he said, "Just wait for this letter."

He scrawled with ease, and the brief note was quickly addressed. "Let Hutchins go with it

at once, will you?" said Grandcourt, pushing the letter away from him.

As Lush had expected, it was addressed to Miss Harleth, Offendene. When his irritation had cooled down, he was glad there had been no explosive quarrel; but he felt sure that there was a notch made against him, and that somehow or other he was intended to pay. It was also clear to him that the immediate effect of his revelation had been to harden Grandcourt's previous determination. But as to the particular movements which made this process in his baffling mind, Lush could only toss up his chin in despair of a theory.

CHAPTER VIII

"He brings white asses laden with the freight
Of Tyrian vessels, purple, gold, and balm,
To bribe my will: I'll bid them chase him forth,
Nor let him breathe the taint of his surmise
On my secure resolve.
Ay, 't is secure,
And therefore let him come to spread his freight.
For firmness hath its appetite and craves
The stronger lure, more strongly to resist;
Would know the touch of gold to fling it off;
Scent wine to feel its lip the soberer;
Behold soft byssus, ivory, and plumes
To say, 'They're fair, but I will none of them,'
And flout Enticement in the very face."

MR. GASCOIGNE one day came to Offendene with what he felt to be the satisfactory news that Mrs. Mompert had fixed Tuesday in the following week for her interview with Gwendolen at Wanchester. He said nothing of his having incidentally heard that Mr. Grandcourt had returned to Diplow; knowing no more than she did that Leubronn had been the goal of her admirer's journeying, and feeling that it would be unkind uselessly to revive the memory of a brilliant prospect under the present reverses. In his secret soul he thought of his niece's unintelligible caprice with regret, but he vindicated her to himself by considering that Grandcourt had been the first to behave oddly, in suddenly walking away when there had been the best opportunity for crowning his marked attentions. The Rector's practical judgment told him that his chief duty to his niece now was to encourage her resolutely to

face the change in her lot, since there was no manifest promise of any event that would avert it.

"You will find an interest in varied experience, my dear, and I have no doubt you will be a more valuable woman for having sustained such a part as you are called to."

"I cannot pretend to believe that I shall like it," said Gwendolen, for the first time showing her uncle some petulance. "But I am quite aware that I am obliged to bear it."

She remembered having submitted to his admonition on a different occasion, when she was expected to like a very different prospect.

"And your good sense will teach you to behave suitably under it," said Mr. Gascoigne, with a shade more gravity. "I feel sure that Mrs. Mompert will be pleased with you. You will know how to conduct yourself to a woman who holds in all senses the relation of superior to you. This trouble has come on you young, but that makes it in some respects easier, and there is benefit in all chastisement if we adjust our minds to it."

This was precisely what Gwendolen was unable to do; and after her uncle was gone, the bitter tears, which had rarely come during the late trouble, rose and fell slowly as she sat alone. Her heart denied that the trouble was easier because she was young. When was she to have any happiness, if it did not come while she was young? Not that her visions of possible happiness for herself were as unmixed with necessary evil as they used to be, — not that she could still imagine herself plucking the fruits of life with-

out suspicion of their core. But this general disenchantment with the world, — nay, with herself, since it appeared that she was not made for easy pre-eminence, — only intensified her sense of forlornness: it was a visibly sterile distance enclosing the dreary path at her feet, in which she had no courage to tread. She was in that first crisis of passionate youthful rebellion against what is not fitly called pain, but rather the absence of joy, — that first rage of disappointment in life's morning, which we whom the years have subdued are apt to remember but dimly as part of our own experience, and so to be intolerant of its self-enclosed unreasonableness and impiety. What passion seems more absurd, when we have got outside it and looked at calamity as a collective risk, than this amazed anguish that I and not Thou, He, or She should be just the smitten one? Yet perhaps some who have afterwards made themselves a willing fence before the breast of another, and have carried their own heart-wound in heroic silence, — some who have made their latter deeds great, nevertheless began with this angry amazement at their own smart, and on the mere denial of their fantastic desires raged as if under the sting of wasps which reduced the universe for them to an unjust infliction of pain. This was nearly poor Gwendolen's condition. What though such a reverse as hers had often happened to other girls? The one point she had been all her life learning to care for was, that it had happened to *her:* it was what *she* felt under Klesmer's demonstration that she was not remarkable enough to command fortune by force of will and

merit; it was what *she* would feel under the rigours of Mrs. Mompert's constant expectation, under the dull demand that she should be cheerful with three Miss Momperts, under the necessity of showing herself entirely submissive, and keeping her thoughts to herself. To be a queen disthroned is not so hard as some other down-stepping: imagine one who had been made to believe in his own divinity finding all homage withdrawn, and himself unable to perform a miracle that would recall the homage and restore his own confidence. Something akin to this illusion and this helplessness had befallen the poor spoiled child, with the lovely lips and eyes and the majestic figure, — which seemed now to have no magic in them.

She rose from the low ottoman where she had been sitting purposeless, and walked up and down the drawing-room, resting her elbow on one palm while she leaned down her cheek on the other, and a slow tear fell. She thought, "I have always, ever since I was little, felt that mamma was not a happy woman; and now I dare say I shall be more unhappy than she has been." Her mind dwelt for a few moments on the picture of herself losing her youth and ceasing to enjoy, — not minding whether she did this or that: but such picturing inevitably brought back the image of her mother. "Poor mamma! it will be still worse for her now. I can get a little money for her, — that is all I shall care about now." And then with an entirely new movement of her imagination, she saw her mother getting quite old and white, and herself no longer young but faded, and their two faces

meeting still with memory and love, and she knowing what was in her mother's mind — "Poor Gwen too is sad and faded now" — and then for the first time she sobbed, not in anger but with a sort of tender misery.

Her face was towards the door, and she saw her mother enter. She barely saw that; for her eyes were large with tears, and she pressed her handkerchief against them hurriedly. Before she took it away she felt her mother's arms round her, and this sensation, which seemed a prolongation of her inward vision, overcame her will to be reticent: she sobbed anew in spite of herself, as they pressed their cheeks together.

Mrs. Davilow had brought something in her hand which had already caused her an agitating anxiety, and she dared not speak until her darling had become calmer. But Gwendolen, with whom weeping had always been a painful manifestation to be resisted if possible, again pressed her handkerchief against her eyes, and with a deep breath drew her head backward and looked at her mother, who was pale and tremulous.

"It was nothing, mamma," said Gwendolen, thinking that her mother had been moved in this way simply by finding her in distress. "It is all over now."

But Mrs. Davilow had withdrawn her arms, and Gwendolen perceived a letter in her hand.

"What is that letter? — worse news still?" she asked with a touch of bitterness.

"I don't know what you will think it, dear," said Mrs. Davilow, keeping the letter in her hand. "You will hardly guess where it comes from."

"Don't ask me to guess anything," said Gwendolen, rather impatiently, as if a bruise were being pressed.

"It is addressed to you, dear."

Gwendolen gave the slightest perceptible toss of the head.

"It comes from Diplow," said Mrs. Davilow, giving her the letter.

She knew Grandcourt's indistinct handwriting, and her mother was not surprised to see her blush deeply; but watching her as she read, and wondering much what was the purport of the letter, she saw the colour die out. Gwendolen's lips even were pale as she turned the open note towards her mother. The words were few and formal.

"Mr. Grandcourt presents his compliments to Miss Harleth, and begs to know whether he may be permitted to call at Offendene to-morrow after two, and to see her alone. Mr. Grandcourt has just returned from Leubronn, where he had hoped to find Miss Harleth."

Mrs. Davilow read, and then looked at her daughter inquiringly, leaving the note in her hand. Gwendolen let it fall on the floor, and turned away.

"It must be answered, darling," said Mrs. Davilow, timidly. "The man waits."

Gwendolen sank on the settee, clasped her hands, and looked straight before her, not at her mother. She had the expression of one who had been startled by a sound and was listening to know what would come of it. The sudden change of the situation was bewildering. A few minutes before she was looking along an ines-

capable path of repulsive monotony, with hopeless inward rebellion against the imperious lot which left her no choice; and lo, now, a moment of choice was come. Yet — was it triumph she felt most or terror? Impossible for Gwendolen not to feel some triumph in a tribute to her power at a time when she was first tasting the bitterness of insignificance: again she seemed to be getting a sort of empire over her own life. But how to use it? Here came the terror. Quick, quick, like pictures in a book beaten open with a sense of hurry, came back vividly, yet in fragments, all that she had gone through in relation to Grandcourt, — the allurements, the vacillations, the resolve to accede, the final repulsion; the incisive face of that dark-eyed lady with the lovely boy; her own pledge (was it a pledge not to marry him?) — the new disbelief in the worth of men and things for which that scene of disclosure had become a symbol. That unalterable experience made a vision at which in the first agitated moment, before tempering reflections could suggest themselves, her native terror shrank.

Where was the good of choice coming again? What did she wish? Anything different? No! and yet in the dark seed-growths of consciousness a new wish was forming itself, — "I wish I had never known it!" Something, anything she wished for that would have saved her from the dread to let Grandcourt come.

It was no long while, — yet it seemed long to Mrs. Davilow, before she thought it well to say, gently, —

"It will be necessary for you to write, dear.

Or shall I write an answer for you, — which you will dictate? "

" No, mamma," said Gwendolen, drawing a deep breath. " But please lay me out the pen and paper."

That was gaining time. Was she to decline Grandcourt's visit, — close the shutters, — not even look out on what would happen? — though with the assurance that she should remain just where she was? The young activity within her made a warm current through her terror, and stirred towards something that would be an event, — towards an opportunity in which she could look and speak with the former effectiveness. The interest of the morrow was no longer at a dead-lock.

" There is really no reason on earth why you should be so alarmed at the man's waiting a few minutes, mamma," said Gwendolen, remonstrantly, as Mrs. Davilow, having prepared the writing materials, looked towards her expectantly. " Servants expect nothing else than to wait. It is not to be supposed that I must write on the instant."

" No, dear," said Mrs. Davilow, in the tone of one corrected, turning to sit down and take up a bit of work that lay at hand; " he can wait another quarter of an hour, if you like."

It was very simple speech and action on her part, but it was what might have been subtly calculated. Gwendolen felt a contradictory desire to be hastened: hurry would save her from deliberate choice.

" I did not mean him to wait long enough for that needlework to be finished," she said, lifting

her hands to stroke the backward curves of her hair, while she rose from her seat and stood still.

"But if you don't feel able to decide?" said Mrs. Davilow, sympathizingly.

"I *must* decide," said Gwendolen, walking to the writing-table and seating herself. All the while there was a busy undercurrent in her, like the thought of a man who keeps up a dialogue while he is considering how he can slip away. Why should she not let him come? It bound her to nothing. He had been to Leubronn after her: of course he meant a direct unmistakable renewal of the suit which before had been only implied. What then? She could reject him. Why was she to deny herself the freedom of doing this, — which she would like to do?

"If Mr. Grandcourt has only just returned from Leubronn," said Mrs. Davilow, observing that Gwendolen leaned back in her chair after taking the pen in her hand, — "I wonder whether he has heard of our misfortunes."

"That could make no difference to a man in his position," said Gwendolen, rather contemptuously.

"It would, to some men," said Mrs. Davilow. "They would not like to take a wife from a family in a state of beggary almost, as we are. Here we are at Offendene, with a great shell over us as usual. But just imagine his finding us at Sawyer's Cottage. Most men are afraid of being bored or taxed by a wife's family. If Mr. Grandcourt did know, I think it a strong proof of his attachment to you."

Mrs. Davilow spoke with unusual emphasis: it was the first time she had ventured to say any-

thing about Grandcourt which would necessarily seem intended as an argument in favour of him, her habitual impression being that such arguments would certainly be useless and might be worse. The effect of her words now was stronger than she could imagine: they raised a new set of possibilities in Gwendolen's mind, — a vision of what Grandcourt might do for her mother if she, Gwendolen, did — what she was not going to do. She was so moved by a new rush of ideas, that, like one conscious of being urgently called away, she felt that the immediate task must be hastened: the letter must be written, else it might be endlessly deferred. After all, she acted in a hurry, as she had wished to do. To act in a hurry was to have a reason for keeping away from an absolute decision, and to leave open as many issues as possible.

She wrote: —

"Miss Harleth presents her compliments to Mr. Grandcourt. She will be at home after two o'clock to-morrow."

Before addressing the note she said, "Pray ring the bell, mamma, if there is any one to answer it." She really did not know who did the work of the house.

It was not till after the letter had been taken away and Gwendolen had risen again, stretching out one arm and then resting it on her head, with a long moan which had a sound of relief in it, that Mrs. Davilow ventured to ask, —

"What did you say, Gwen?"

"I said that I should be at home," answered Gwendolen, rather loftily. Then, after a pause,

"You must not expect, because Mr. Grandcourt is coming, that anything is going to happen, mamma."

"I don't allow myself to expect anything, dear. I desire you to follow your own feeling. You have never told me what that was."

"What is the use of telling?" said Gwendolen, hearing a reproach in that true statement. "When I have anything pleasant to tell, you may be sure I will tell you."

"But Mr. Grandcourt will consider that you have already accepted him, in allowing him to come. His note tells you plainly enough that he is coming to make you an offer."

"Very well; and I wish to have the pleasure of refusing him."

Mrs. Davilow looked up in wonderment, but Gwendolen implied her wish not to be questioned further by saying, —

"Put down that detestable needlework, and let us walk in the avenue. I am stifled."

CHAPTER IX

"Desire has trimmed the sails, and Circumstance
Brings but the breeze to fill them."

WHILE Grandcourt on his beautiful black Yarico, the groom behind him on Criterion, was taking the pleasant ride from Diplow to Offendene, Gwendolen was seated before the mirror while her mother gathered up the lengthy mass of light-brown hair which she had been carefully brushing.

"Only gather it up easily and make a coil, mamma," said Gwendolen.

"Let me bring you some earrings, Gwen," said Mrs. Davilow, when the hair was adjusted, and they were both looking at the reflection in the glass. It was impossible for them not to notice that the eyes looked brighter than they had done of late, that there seemed to be a shadow lifted from the face, leaving all the lines once more in their placid youthfulness. The mother drew some inferences that made her voice rather cheerful. "You do want your earrings?"

"No, mamma; I shall not wear any ornaments, and I shall put on my black silk. Black is the only wear when one is going to refuse an offer," said Gwendolen, with one of her old smiles at her mother, while she rose to throw off her dressing-gown.

"Suppose the offer is not made after all," said Mrs. Davilow, not without a sly intention.

"Then that will be because I refuse it before-

hand," said Gwendolen. "It comes to the same thing."

There was a proud little toss of her head as she said this; and when she walked downstairs in her long black robes, there was just that firm poise of head and elasticity of form which had lately been missing, as in a parched plant. Her mother thought, "She is quite herself again. It must be pleasure in his coming. Can her mind be really made up against him?"

Gwendolen would have been rather angry if that thought had been uttered; perhaps all the more because through the last twenty hours, with a brief interruption of sleep, she had been so occupied with perpetually alternating images and arguments for and against the possibility of her marrying Grandcourt, that the conclusion which she had determined on beforehand ceased to have any hold on her consciousness: the alternate dip of counterbalancing thoughts begotten of counterbalancing desires had brought her into a state in which no conclusion could look fixed to her. She would have expressed her resolve as before; but it was a form out of which the blood had been sucked, — no more a part of quivering life than the "God's will be done" of one who is eagerly watching chances. She did not mean to accept Grandcourt; from the first moment of receiving his letter she had meant to refuse him; still, that could not but prompt her to look the unwelcome reasons full in the face until she had a little less awe of them, could not hinder her imagination from filling out her knowledge in various ways, some of which seemed to change the aspect of what she

knew. By dint of looking at a dubious object with a constructive imagination, one can give it twenty different shapes. Her indistinct grounds of hesitation before the interview at the Whispering Stones, at present counted for nothing; they were all merged in the final repulsion. If it had not been for that day in Cardell Chase, she said to herself now, there would have been no obstacle to her marrying Grandcourt. On that day and after it, she had not reasoned and balanced: she had acted with a force of impulse against which all questioning was no more than a voice against a torrent. The impulse had come, — not only from her maidenly pride and jealousy, not only from the shock of another woman's calamity thrust close on her vision, but — from her dread of wrong-doing, which was vague, it is true, and aloof from the daily details of her life, but not the less strong. Whatever was accepted as consistent with being a lady she had no scruple about; but from the dim region of what was called disgraceful, wrong, guilty, she shrank with mingled pride and terror; and even apart from shame, her feeling would have made her place any deliberate injury of another in the region of guilt.

But now — did she know exactly what was the state of the case with regard to Mrs. Glasher and her children? She had given a sort of promise, — had said, "I will not interfere with your wishes." But would another woman who married Grandcourt be in fact the decisive obstacle to her wishes, or be doing her and her boy any real injury? Might it not be just as well, nay better, that Grandcourt should marry? For

what could not a woman do when she was married, if she knew how to assert herself? Here all was constructive imagination. Gwendolen had about as accurate a conception of marriage — that is to say, of the mutual influences, demands, duties of man and woman in the state of matrimony — as she had of magnetic currents and the law of storms.

"Mamma managed badly," was her way of summing up what she had seen of her mother's experience; she herself would manage quite differently. And the trials of matrimony were the last theme into which Mrs. Davilow could choose to enter fully with this daughter.

"I wonder what mamma and my uncle would say if they knew about Mrs. Glasher!" thought Gwendolen, in her inward debating; not that she could imagine herself telling them, even if she had not felt bound to silence. "I wonder what anybody would say; or what they would say to Mr. Grandcourt's marrying some one else and having other children!" To consider what "anybody" would say, was to be released from the difficulty of judging where everything was obscure to her when feeling had ceased to be decisive. She had only to collect her memories, which proved to her that "anybody" regarded illegitimate children as more rightfully to be looked shy on and deprived of social advantages than illegitimate fathers. The verdict of "anybody" seemed to be that she had no reason to concern herself greatly on behalf of Mrs. Glasher and her children.

But there was another way in which they had caused her concern. What others might think,

could not do away with a feeling which in the first instance would hardly be too strongly described as indignation and loathing that she should have been expected to unite herself with an outworn life, full of backward secrets which must have been more keenly felt than any associations with *her*. True, the question of love on her own part had occupied her scarcely at all in relation to Grandcourt. The desirability of marriage for her had always seemed due to other feelings than love; and to be enamoured was the part of the man, on whom the advances depended. Gwendolen had found no objection to Grandcourt's way of being enamoured before she had had that glimpse of his past, which she resented as if it had been a deliberate offence against her. His advances to *her* were deliberate, and she felt a retrospective disgust for them. Perhaps other men's lives were of the same kind, — full of secrets which made the ignorant suppositions of the woman they wanted to marry a farce at which they were laughing in their sleeves.

These feelings of disgust and indignation had sunk deep; and though other troublous experience in the last weeks had dulled them from passion into remembrance, it was chiefly their reverberating activity which kept her firm to the understanding with herself, that she was not going to accept Grandcourt. She had never meant to form a new determination; she had only been considering what might be thought or said. If anything could have induced her to change, it would have been the prospect of making all things easy for "poor mamma:"

that, she admitted, was a temptation. But no! she was going to refuse him. Meanwhile the thought that he was coming to be refused was inspiriting: she had the white reins in her hands again; there was a new current in her frame, reviving her from the beaten-down consciousness in which she had been left by the interview with Klesmer. She was not now going to crave an opinion of her capabilities; she was going to exercise her power.

Was this what made her heart palpitate annoyingly when she heard the horse's footsteps on the gravel? — when Miss Merry, who opened the door to Grandcourt, came to tell her that he was in the drawing-room? The hours of preparation and the triumph of the situation were apparently of no use: she might as well have seen Grandcourt coming suddenly on her in the midst of her despondency. While walking into the drawing-room she had to concentrate all her energy in that self-control which made her appear gravely gracious as she gave her hand to him, and answered his hope that she was quite well in a voice as low and languid as his own. A moment afterwards, when they were both of them seated on two of the wreath-painted chairs, — Gwendolen upright with downcast eyelids, Grandcourt about two yards distant, leaning one arm over the back of his chair and looking at her, while he held his hat in his left hand, — any one seeing them as a picture would have concluded that they were in some stage of love-making suspense. And certainly the love-making had begun: she already felt herself being wooed by this silent man seated at an

agreeable distance, with the subtlest atmosphere of attar of roses and an attention bent wholly on her. And he also considered himself to be wooing: he was not a man to suppose that his presence carried no consequences; and he was exactly the man to feel the utmost piquancy in a girl whom he had not found quite calculable.

"I was disappointed not to find you at Leubronn," he began, his usual broken drawl having just a shade of amorous languor in it. "The place was intolerable without you. A mere kennel of a place. Don't you think so?"

"I can't judge what it would be without myself," said Gwendolen, turning her eyes on him, with some recovered sense of mischief. "*With* myself I liked it well enough to have stayed longer, if I could. But I was obliged to come home on account of family troubles."

"It was very cruel of you to go to Leubronn," said Grandcourt, taking no notice of the troubles, on which Gwendolen — she hardly knew why — wished that there should be a clear understanding at once. "You must have known that it would spoil everything: you knew you were the heart and soul of everything that went on. Are you quite reckless about me?"

It was impossible to say "yes" in a tone that would be taken seriously, equally impossible to say "no;" but what else could she say? In her difficulty, she turned down her eyelids again, and blushed over face and neck. Grandcourt saw her in a new phase, and believed that she was showing her inclination; but he was determined that she should show it more decidedly.

"Perhaps there is some deeper interest?

Some attraction — some engagement — which it would have been only fair to make me aware of? Is there any man who stands between us?"

Inwardly the answer framed itself, "No; but there is a woman." Yet how could she utter this? Even if she had not promised that woman to be silent, it would have been impossible for her to enter on the subject with Grandcourt. But how could she arrest this wooing by beginning to make a formal speech, — "I perceive your intention — it is most flattering, &c."? A fish honestly invited to come and be eaten has a clear course in declining, but how if it finds itself swimming against a net? And apart from the network, would she have dared at once to say anything decisive? Gwendolen had not time to be clear on that point. As it was, she felt compelled to silence; and after a pause, Grandcourt said, —

"Am I to understand that some one else is preferred?"

Gwendolen, now impatient of her own embarrassment, determined to rush at the difficulty and free herself. She raised her eyes again and said with something of her former clearness and defiance, "No," wishing him to understand, "What then? I may not be ready to take *you.*" There was nothing that Grandcourt could not understand which he perceived likely to affect his *amour propre.*

"The last thing I would do, is to importune you. I should not hope to win you by making myself a bore. If there were no hope for me, I would ask you to tell me so at once, that I might just ride away to — no matter where."

Almost to her own astonishment, Gwendolen felt a sudden alarm at the image of Grandcourt finally riding away. What would be left her then? Nothing but the former dreariness. She liked him to be there. She snatched at the subject that would defer any decisive answer.

"I fear you are not aware of what has happened to us. I have lately had to think so much of my mamma's troubles, that other subjects have been quite thrown into the background. She has lost all her fortune, and we are going to leave this place. I must ask you to excuse my seeming preoccupied."

In eluding a direct appeal Gwendolen recovered some of her self-possession. She spoke with dignity and looked straight at Grandcourt, whose long, narrow, impenetrable eyes met hers, and mysteriously arrested them, — mysteriously; for the subtly varied drama between man and woman is often such as can hardly be rendered in words put together like dominos, according to obvious fixed marks. The word of all work Love will no more express the myriad modes of mutual attraction, than the word Thought can inform you what is passing through your neighbour's mind. It would be hard to tell on which side — Gwendolen's or Grandcourt's — the influence was more mixed. At that moment his strongest wish was to be completely master of this creature — this piquant combination of maidenliness and mischief: that she knew things which had made her start away from him, spurred him to triumph over that repugnance; and he was believing that he should triumph. And she — ah, piteous equality in the need to

dominate! — she was overcome like the thirsty one who is drawn towards the seeming water in the desert, overcome by the suffused sense that here in this man's homage to her lay the rescue from helpless subjection to an oppressive lot.

All the while they were looking at each other; and Grandcourt said, slowly and languidly as if it were of no importance, other things having been settled, —

"You will tell me now, I hope, that Mrs. Davilow's loss of fortune will not trouble you further. You will trust me to prevent it from weighing upon her. You will give me the claim to provide against that."

The little pauses and refined drawlings with which this speech was uttered, gave time for Gwendolen to go through the dream of a life. As the words penetrated her, they had the effect of a draught of wine, which suddenly makes all things easier, desirable things not so wrong, and people in general less disagreeable. She had a momentary phantasmal love for this man who chose his words so well, and who was a mere incarnation of delicate homage. Repugnance, dread, scruples, — these were dim as remembered pains, while she was already tasting relief under the immediate pain of hopelessness. She imagined herself already springing to her mother, and being playful again. Yet when Grandcourt had ceased to speak, there was an instant in which she was conscious of being at the turning of the ways.

"You are very generous," she said, not moving her eyes, and speaking with a gentle intonation.

"You accept what will make such things a

matter of course?" said Grandcourt, without any new eagerness. "You consent to become my wife?"

This time Gwendolen remained quite pale. Something made her rise from her seat in spite of herself and walk to a little distance. Then she turned and with her hands folded before her stood in silence.

Grandcourt immediately rose too, resting his hat on the chair, but still keeping hold of it. The evident hesitation of this destitute girl to take his splendid offer stung him into a keenness of interest such as he had not known for years. None the less because he attributed her hesitation entirely to her knowledge about Mrs. Glasher. In that attitude of preparation, he said, —

"Do you command me to go?" No familiar spirit could have suggested to him more effective words.

"No," said Gwendolen. She could not let him go: that negative was a clutch. She seemed to herself to be, after all, only drifted towards the tremendous decision; but drifting depends on something besides the currents, when the sails have been set beforehand.

"You accept my devotion?" said Grandcourt, holding his hat by his side and looking straight into her eyes, without other movement. Their eyes meeting in that way seemed to allow any length of pause; but wait as long as she would, how could she contradict herself? What had she detained him for? He had shut out any explanation.

"Yes," came as gravely from Gwendolen's lips as if she had been answering to her name in

a court of justice. He received it gravely, and they still looked at each other in the same attitude. Was there ever before such a way of accepting the bliss-giving "Yes"? Grandcourt liked better to be at that distance from her, and to feel under a ceremony imposed by an indefinable prohibition that breathed from Gwendolen's bearing.

But he did at length lay down his hat and advance to take her hand, just pressing his lips upon it and letting it go again. She thought his behaviour perfect, and gained a sense of freedom which made her almost ready to be mischievous. Her "Yes" entailed so little at this moment, that there was nothing to screen the reversal of her gloomy prospects: her vision was filled by her own release from the Momperts, and her mother's release from Sawyer's Cottage. With a happy curl of the lips, she said, —

"Will you not see mamma? I will fetch her."

"Let us wait a little," said Grandcourt, in his favourite attitude, having his left forefinger and thumb in his waistcoat pocket, and with his right caressing his whisker, while he stood near Gwendolen and looked at her, — not unlike a gentleman who has a felicitous introduction at an evening party.

"Have you anything else to say to me?" said Gwendolen, playfully.

"Yes, — I know having things said to you is a great bore," said Grandcourt, rather sympathetically.

"Not when they are things I like to hear."

"Will it bother you to be asked how soon we can be married?"

"I think it will, to-day," said Gwendolen, putting up her chin saucily.

"Not to-day, then, but to-morrow. Think of it before I come to-morrow. In a fortnight — or three weeks — as soon as possible."

"Ah, you think you will be tired of my company," said Gwendolen. "I notice when people are married the husband is not so much with his wife as when they were engaged. But perhaps I shall like that better too."

She laughed charmingly.

"You shall have whatever you like," said Grandcourt.

"And nothing that I don't like? — please say that; because I think I dislike what I don't like more than I like what I like," said Gwendolen, finding herself in the woman's paradise where all her nonsense is adorable.

Grandcourt paused: these were subtilties in which he had much experience of his own. "I don't know — this is such a brute of a world, things are always turning up that one does n't like. I can't always hinder your being bored. If you like to hunt Criterion, I can't hinder his coming down by some chance or other."

"Ah, my friend Criterion, how is he?"

"He is outside: I made the groom ride him, that you might see him. He had the side-saddle on for an hour or two yesterday. Come to the window and look at him."

They could see the two horses being taken slowly round the sweep; and the beautiful creatures, in their fine grooming, sent a thrill of exultation through Gwendolen. They were the symbols of command and luxury, in delightful

contrast with the ugliness of poverty and humiliation at which she had lately been looking close.

"Will you ride Criterion to-morrow?" said Grandcourt. "If you will, everything shall be arranged."

"I should like it of all things," said Gwendolen. "I want to lose myself in a gallop again. But now I must go and fetch mamma."

"Take my arm to the door, then," said Grandcourt; and she accepted. Their faces were very near each other, being almost on a level, and he was looking at her. She thought his manners as a lover more agreeable than any she had seen described. She had no alarm lest he meant to kiss her, and was so much at her ease that she suddenly paused in the middle of the room and said, half archly, half earnestly, —

"Oh, while I think of it, — there is something I dislike that you can save me from. I do *not* like Mr. Lush's company."

"You shall not have it. I 'll get rid of him."

"You are not fond of him yourself?"

"Not in the least. I let him hang on me because he has always been a poor devil," said Grandcourt, in an *adagio* of utter indifference. "They got him to travel with me when I was a lad. He was always that coarse-haired kind of brute, — a sort of cross between a hog and a *dilettante*."

Gwendolen laughed. All that seemed kind and natural enough: Grandcourt's fastidiousness enhanced the kindness. And when they reached the door, his way of opening it for her was the perfection of easy homage. Really,

she thought, he was likely to be the least disagreeable of husbands.

Mrs. Davilow was waiting anxiously in her bedroom when Gwendolen entered, stepped towards her quickly, and kissing her on both cheeks said in a low tone, " Come down, mamma, and see Mr. Grandcourt. I am engaged to him."

" My darling child! " said Mrs. Davilow, with a surprise that was rather solemn than glad.

" Yes," said Gwendolen, in the same tone, and with a quickness which implied that it was needless to ask questions. " Everything is settled. You are not going to Sawyer's Cottage, I am not going to be inspected by Mrs. Mompert, and everything is to be as I like. So come down with me immediately."

Book Four

GWENDOLEN GETS HER CHOICE

CHAPTER I

Il est plus aisé de connoître l'homme en général que de connoître un homme en particulier. — La Rochefoucauld.

An hour after Grandcourt had left, the important news of Gwendolen's engagement was known at the Rectory, and Mr. and Mrs. Gascoigne, with Anna, spent the evening at Offendene.

"My dear, let me congratulate you on having created a strong attachment," said the Rector. "You look serious, and I don't wonder at it: a lifelong union is a solemn thing. But from the way Mr. Grandcourt has acted and spoken I think we may already see some good arising out of our adversity. It has given you an opportunity of observing your future husband's delicate liberality."

Mr. Gascoigne referred to Grandcourt's mode of implying that he would provide for Mrs. Davilow, — a part of the love-making which Gwendolen had remembered to cite to her mother with perfect accuracy.

"But I have no doubt that Mr. Grandcourt would have behaved quite as handsomely if you had not gone away to Germany, Gwendolen, and had been engaged to him, as you no doubt

might have been, more than a month ago," said Mrs. Gascoigne, feeling that she had to discharge a duty on this occasion. "But now there is no more room for caprice; indeed, I trust you have no inclination to any. A woman has a great debt of gratitude to a man who perseveres in making her such an offer. But no doubt you feel properly."

"I am not at all sure that I do, aunt," said Gwendolen, with saucy gravity. "I don't know everything it is proper to feel on being engaged."

The Rector patted her shoulder and smiled as at a bit of innocent naughtiness, and his wife took his behaviour as an indication that she was not to be displeased. As for Anna, she kissed Gwendolen and said, "I do hope you will be happy," but then sank into the background and tried to keep the tears back too. In the late days she had been imagining a little romance about Rex, — how if he still longed for Gwendolen, her heart might be softened by trouble into love, so that they could by and by be married. And the romance had turned to a prayer that she, Anna, might be able to rejoice like a good sister, and only think of being useful in working for Gwendolen, as long as Rex was not rich. But now she wanted grace to rejoice in something else. Miss Merry and the four girls, — Alice with the high shoulders, Bertha and Fanny the whisperers, and Isabel the listener, — were all present on this family occasion, when everything seemed appropriately turning to the honour and glory of Gwendolen, and real life was as interesting as "Sir Charles Grandison."

The evening passed chiefly in decisive remarks from the Rector, in answer to conjectures from the two elder ladies. According to him, the case was not one in which he could think it his duty to mention settlements: everything must, and doubtless would safely be left to Mr. Grandcourt.

"I should like to know exactly what sort of places Ryelands and Gadsmere are," said Mrs. Davilow.

"Gadsmere, I believe, is a secondary place," said Mr. Gascoigne; "but Ryelands I know to be one of our finest seats. The park is extensive, and the woods of a very valuable order. The house was built by Inigo Jones, and the ceilings are painted in the Italian style. The estate is said to be worth twelve thousand a-year, and there are two livings, one a rectory, in the gift of the Grandcourts. There may be some burthens on the land. Still, Mr. Grandcourt was an only child."

"It would be most remarkable," said Mrs. Gascoigne, "if he were to become Lord Stannery in addition to everything else. Only think: there is the Grandcourt estate, the Mallinger estate, *and* the baronetcy, *and* the peerage,"—she was marking off the items on her fingers, and paused on the fourth while she added, "but they say there will be no land coming to him with the peerage." It seemed a pity there was nothing for the fifth finger.

"The peerage," said the Rector, judiciously, "must be regarded as a remote chance. There are two cousins between the present peer and Mr. Grandcourt. It is certainly a serious reflection how death and other causes do sometimes

concentrate inheritances on one man. But an excess of that kind is to be deprecated. To be Sir Mallinger Grandcourt Mallinger — I suppose that will be his style — with the corresponding properties, is a valuable talent enough for any man to have committed to him. Let us hope it will be well used."

"And what a position for the wife, Gwendolen!" said Mrs. Gascoigne; "a great responsibility indeed. But you must lose no time in writing to Mrs. Mompert, Henry. It is a good thing that you have an engagement of marriage to offer as an excuse, else she might feel offended. She is rather a high woman."

"I am rid of that horror," thought Gwendolen, to whom the name of Mompert had become a sort of Mumbo-jumbo. She was very silent through the evening, and that night could hardly sleep at all in her little white bed. It was a rarity in her strong youth to be wakeful; and perhaps a still greater rarity for her to be careful that her mother should not know of her restlessness. But her state of mind was altogether new: she who had been used to feel sure of herself, and ready to manage others, had just taken a decisive step which she had beforehand thought that she would not take, — nay, perhaps, was bound not to take. She could not go backward now; she liked a great deal of what lay before her; and there was nothing for her to like if she went back. But her resolution was dogged by the shadow of that previous resolve which had at first come as the undoubting movement of her whole being. While she lay on her pillow with wide-open eyes, "looking on dark-

ness which the blind do see," she was appalled by the idea that she was going to do what she had once started away from with repugnance. It was new to her that a question of right or wrong in her conduct should rouse her terror; she had known no compunction that atoning caresses and presents could not lay to rest. But here had come a moment when something like a new consciousness was awaked. She seemed on the edge of adopting deliberately, as a notion for all the rest of her life, what she had rashly said in her bitterness, when her discovery had driven her away to Leubronn, — that it did not signify what she did; she had only to amuse herself as best she could. That lawlessness, that casting away of all care for justification, suddenly frightened her: it came to her with the shadowy array of possible calamity behind it, — calamity which had ceased to be a mere name for her; and all the infiltrated influences of disregarded religious teaching, as well as the deeper impressions of something awful and inexorable enveloping her, seemed to concentrate themselves in the vague conception of avenging power. The brilliant position she had longed for, the imagined freedom she would create for herself in marriage, the deliverance from the dull insignificance of her girlhood, — all were immediately before her; and yet they had come to her hunger like food with the taint of sacrilege upon it, which she must snatch with terror. In the darkness and loneliness of her little bed, her more resistant self could not act against the first onslaught of dread after her irrevocable decision. That unhappy-faced woman and her

children — Grandcourt and his relations with her — kept repeating themselves in her imagination like the clinging memory of a disgrace, and gradually obliterated all other thought, leaving only the consciousness that she had taken those scenes into her life. Her long wakefulness seemed a delirium; a faint, faint light penetrated beside the window-curtain; the chillness increased. She could bear it no longer, and cried, "Mamma!"

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Davilow, immediately, in a wakeful voice.

"Let me come to you."

She soon went to sleep on her mother's shoulder, and slept on till late, when, dreaming of a lit-up ball-room, she opened her eyes on her mother standing by the bedside with a small packet in her hand.

"I am sorry to wake you, darling, but I thought it better to give you this at once. The groom has brought Criterion; he has come on another horse, and says he is to stay here."

Gwendolen sat up in bed and opened the packet. It was a delicate little enamelled casket, and inside was a splendid diamond ring with a letter which contained a folded bit of coloured paper and these words: —

Pray wear this ring when I come at twelve in sign of our betrothal. I enclose a check drawn in the name of Mr. Gascoigne, for immediate expenses. Of course Mrs. Davilow will remain at Offendene, at least for some time. I hope, when I come, you will have granted me an early day, when you may begin to command me at a shorter distance. — Yours devotedly,

H. M. Grandcourt.

The check was for five hundred pounds; and Gwendolen turned it towards her mother, with the letter.

"How very kind and delicate!" said Mrs. Davilow, with much feeling. "But I really should like better not to be dependent on a son-in-law. I and the girls could get along very well."

"Mamma, if you say that again, I will not marry him," said Gwendolen, angrily.

"My dear child, I trust you are not going to marry only for my sake," said Mrs. Davilow, deprecatingly.

Gwendolen tossed her head on the pillow away from her mother, and let the ring lie. She was irritated at this attempt to take away a motive. Perhaps the deeper cause of her irritation was the consciousness that she was not going to marry solely for her mamma's sake, — that she was drawn towards the marriage in ways against which stronger reasons than her mother's renunciation were yet not strong enough to hinder her. She had waked up to the signs that she was irrevocably engaged; and all the ugly visions, the alarms, the arguments of the night, must be met by daylight, in which probably they would show themselves weak.

"What I long for is your happiness, dear," continued Mrs. Davilow, pleadingly. "I will not say anything to vex you. Will you not put on the ring?"

For a few moments Gwendolen did not answer, but her thoughts were active. At last she raised herself with a determination to do as she would do if she had started on horseback, and

go on with spirit, whatever ideas might be running in her head.

"I thought the lover always put on the betrothal ring himself," she said laughingly, slipping the ring on her finger, and looking at it with a charming movement of her head. "I know why he has sent it," she added, nodding at her mamma.

"Why?"

"He would rather make me put it on than ask me to let him do it. Aha! he is very proud. But so am I. We shall match each other. I should hate a man who went down on his knees, and came fawning on me. He really is not disgusting."

"That is very moderate praise, Gwen."

"No, it is not, for a man," said Gwendolen, gayly. "But now I must get up and dress. Will you come and do my hair, mamma dear," she went on, drawing down her mamma's face to caress it with her own cheeks, "and not be so naughty any more as to talk of living in poverty? You must bear to be made comfortable, even if you don't like it. And Mr. Grandcourt behaves perfectly, now, does he not?"

"Certainly he does," said Mrs. Davilow, encouraged, and persuaded that after all Gwendolen was fond of her betrothed. She herself thought him a man whose attentions were likely to tell on a girl's feeling. Suitors must often be judged as words are, by the standing and the figure they make in polite society: it is difficult to know much else of them. And all the mother's anxiety turned, not on Grand-

court's character, but on Gwendolen's mood in accepting him.

The mood was necessarily passing through a new phase this morning. Even in the hour of making her toilet, she had drawn on all the knowledge she had for grounds to justify her marriage. And what she most dwelt on was the determination that when she was Grandcourt's wife she would urge him to the most liberal conduct towards Mrs. Glasher's children.

"Of what use would it be to her that I should not marry him? He could have married her if he had liked; but he did *not* like. Perhaps she is to blame for that. There must be a great deal about her that I know nothing of. And he must have been good to her in many ways, else she would not have wanted to marry him."

But that last argument at once began to appear doubtful. Mrs. Glasher naturally wished to exclude other children who would stand between Grandcourt and her own; and Gwendolen's comprehension of this feeling prompted another way of reconciling claims.

"Perhaps we shall have no children. I hope we shall not. And he might leave the estate to the pretty little boy. My uncle said that Mr. Grandcourt could do as he liked with the estates. Only when Sir Hugo Mallinger dies there will be enough for two."

This made Mrs. Glasher appear quite unreasonable in demanding that her boy should be sole heir; and the double property was a security that Grandcourt's marriage would do her no wrong, when the wife was Gwendolen Harleth with all her proud resolution not to be fairly

accused. This maiden had been accustomed to think herself blameless; other persons only were faulty.

It was striking that in the hold which this argument of her doing no wrong to Mrs. Glasher had taken on her mind, her repugnance to the idea of Grandcourt's past had sunk into a subordinate feeling. The terror she had felt in the night-watches at over-stepping the border of wickedness by doing what she had at first felt to be wrong, had dulled any emotions about his conduct. She was thinking of him, whatever he might be, as a man over whom she was going to have indefinite power; and her loving him having never been a question with her, any agreeableness he had was so much gain. Poor Gwendolen had no awe of unmanageable forces in the state of matrimony, but regarded it as altogether a matter of management, in which she would know how to act. In relation to Grandcourt's past she encouraged new doubts whether he were likely to have differed much from other men; and she devised little schemes for learning what was expected of men in general.

But whatever else might be true in the world, her hair was dressed suitably for riding, and she went down in her riding-habit, to avoid delay before getting on horseback. She wanted to have her blood stirred once more with the intoxication of youth, and to recover the daring with which she had been used to think of her course in life. Already a load was lifted off her; for in daylight and activity it was less oppressive to have doubts about her choice, than to feel that

she had no choice but to endure insignificance and servitude.

"Go back and make yourself look like a duchess, mamma," she said, turning suddenly as she was going downstairs. "Put your point-lace over your head. I must have you look like a duchess. You must not take things humbly."

When Grandcourt raised her left hand gently and looked at the ring, she said gravely, "It was very good of you to think of everything and send me that packet."

"You will tell me if there is anything I forget?" he said, keeping the hand softly within his own. "I will do anything you wish."

"But I am very unreasonable in my wishes," said Gwendolen, smiling.

"Yes, I expect that. Women always are."

"Then I will not be unreasonable," said Gwendolen, taking away her hand and tossing her head saucily. "I will not be told that I am what women always are."

"I did not say that," said Grandcourt, looking at her with his usual gravity. "You are what no other woman is."

"And what is that, pray?" said Gwendolen, moving to a distance with a little air of menace.

Grandcourt made his pause before he answered: "You are the woman I love."

"Oh, what nice speeches!" said Gwendolen, laughing. The sense of that love which he must once have given to another woman under strange circumstances was getting familiar.

"Give me a nice speech in return. Say when we are to be married."

"Not yet. Not till we have had a gallop over

the downs. I am so thirsty for that, I can think of nothing else. I wish the hunting had begun. Sunday the twentieth, twenty-seventh, Monday, Tuesday." Gwendolen was counting on her fingers with the prettiest nod while she looked at Grandcourt, and at last swept one palm over the other while she said triumphantly, "It will begin in ten days!"

"Let us be married in ten days, then," said Grandcourt, "and we shall not be bored about the stables."

"What do women always say in answer to that?" said Gwendolen, mischievously.

"They agree to it," said the lover, rather off his guard.

"Then I will not!" said Gwendolen, taking up her gauntlets and putting them on, while she kept her eyes on him with gathering fun in them.

The scene was pleasant on both sides. A cruder lover would have lost the view of her pretty ways and attitudes, and spoiled all by stupid attempts at caresses, utterly destructive of drama. Grandcourt preferred the drama; and Gwendolen, left at ease, found her spirits rising continually as she played at reigning. Perhaps if Klesmer had seen more of her in this unconscious kind of acting, instead of when she was trying to be theatrical, he might have rated her chance higher.

When they had had a glorious gallop, however, she was in a state of exhilaration that disposed her to think well of hastening the marriage which would make her life all of a piece with this splendid kind of enjoyment. She

would not debate any more about an act to which she had committed herself; and she consented to fix the wedding on that day three weeks, notwithstanding the difficulty of fulfilling the customary laws of the *trousseau.*

Lush, of course, was made aware of the engagement by abundant signs, without being formally told. But he expected some communication as a consequence of it, and after a few days he became rather impatient under Grandcourt's silence, feeling sure that the change would affect his personal prospects, and wishing to know exactly how. His tactics no longer included any opposition, — which he did not love for its own sake. He might easily cause Grandcourt a great deal of annoyance, but it would be to his own injury, and to create annoyance was not a motive with him. Miss Gwendolen he would certainly not have been sorry to frustrate a little, but — after all, there was no knowing what would come. It was nothing new that Grandcourt should show a perverse wilfulness; yet in his freak about this girl he struck Lush rather newly as something like a man who was *fey* — led on by an ominous fatality; and that one born to his fortune should make a worse business of his life than was necessary, seemed really pitiable. Having protested against the marriage, Lush had a second-sight for its evil consequences. Grandcourt had been taking the pains to write letters and give orders himself instead of employing Lush; and appeared to be ignoring his usefulness, even choosing, against the habit of years, to breakfast alone in his dressing-room. But a *tête-à-*

tête was not to be avoided in a house empty of guests; and Lush hastened to use an opportunity of saying, — it was one day after dinner, for there were difficulties in Grandcourt's dining at Offendene, —

"And when is the marriage to take place?"

Grandcourt, who drank little wine, had left the table and was lounging, while he smoked, in an easy-chair near the hearth, where a fire of oak boughs was gaping to its glowing depths, and edging them with a delicate tint of ashes delightful to behold. The chair of red-brown velvet brocade was a becoming background for his pale-tinted well-cut features and exquisite long hands: omitting the cigar, you might have imagined him a portrait by Moroni, who would have rendered wonderfully the impenetrable gaze and air of distinction; and a portrait by that great master would have been quite as lively a companion as Grandcourt was disposed to be. But he answered without unusual delay, —

"On the tenth."

"I suppose you intend to remain here."

"We shall go to Ryelands for a little while; but we shall return here for the sake of the hunting."

After this word there was the languid inarticulate sound frequent with Grandcourt when he meant to continue speaking, and Lush waited for something more. Nothing came, and he was going to put another question, when the inarticulate sound began again and introduced the mildly uttered suggestion, —

"You had better make some new arrangement for yourself."

"What! I am to cut and run?" said Lush, prepared to be good-tempered on the occasion.

"Something of that kind."

"The bride objects to me. I hope she will make up to you for the want of my services."

"I can't help your being so damnably disagreeable to women," said Grandcourt, in soothing apology.

"To one woman, if you please."

"It makes no difference, since she is the one in question."

"I suppose I am not to be turned adrift after fifteen years without some provision."

"You must have saved something out of me."

"Deuced little. I have often saved something for you."

"You can have three hundred a-year. But you must live in town and be ready to look after things for me when I want you. I shall be rather hard up."

"If you are not going to be at Ryelands this winter, I might run down there and let you know how Swinton goes on."

"If you like. I don't care a toss where you are, so that you keep out of sight."

"Much obliged," said Lush, able to take the affair more easily than he had expected. He was supported by the secret belief that he should by and by be wanted as much as ever.

"Perhaps you will not object to packing up as soon as possible," said Grandcourt. "The Torringtons are coming, and Miss Harleth will be riding over here."

"With all my heart. Can't I be of use in going to Gadsmere?"

"No. I am going myself."

"About your being rather hard up. Have you thought of that plan — "

"Just leave me alone, will you?" said Grandcourt, in his lowest audible tone, tossing his cigar into the fire, and rising to walk away.

He spent the evening in the solitude of the smaller drawing-room, where, with various new publications on the table, of the kind a gentleman may like to have at hand without touching, he employed himself (as a philosopher might have done) in sitting meditatively on a sofa and abstaining from literature, — political, comic, cynical, or romantic. In this way hours may pass surprisingly soon, without the arduous invisible chase of philosophy; not from love of thought, but from hatred of effort, — from a state of the inward world, something like premature age, where the need for action lapses into a mere image of what has been, is, and may or might be; where impulse is born and dies in a phantasmal world, pausing in rejection even of a shadowy fulfilment. That is a condition which often comes with whitening hair; and sometimes, too, an intense obstinacy and tenacity of rule, like the main trunk of an exorbitant egoism, conspicuous in proportion as the varied susceptibilities of younger years are stripped away.

But Grandcourt's hair, though he had not much of it, was of a fine sunny blond, and his moods were not entirely to be explained as ebbing energy. We mortals have a strange spiritual chemistry going on within us, so that a lazy stagnation or even a cottony milkiness may be preparing one knows not what biting or explo-

sive material. The navvy waking from sleep and without malice heaving a stone to crush the life out of his still sleeping comrade, is understood to lack the trained motive which makes a character fairly calculable in its actions; but by a roundabout course even a gentleman may make of himself a chancy personage, raising an uncertainty as to what he may do next, which sadly spoils companionship.

Grandcourt's thoughts this evening were like the circlets one sees in a dark pool continually dying out and continually started again by some impulse from below the surface. The deeper central impulse came from the image of Gwendolen; but the thoughts it stirred would be imperfectly illustrated by a reference to the amatory poets of all ages. It was characteristic that he got none of his satisfaction from the belief that Gwendolen was in love with him; and that love had overcome the jealous resentment which had made her run away from him. On the contrary, he believed that this girl was rather exceptional in the fact that, in spite of his assiduous attention to her, she was not in love with him; and it seemed to him very likely that if it had not been for the sudden poverty which had come over her family, she would not have accepted him. From the very first there had been an exasperating fascination in the tricksiness with which she had — not met his advances, but — wheeled away from them. She had been brought to accept him in spite of everything, — brought to kneel down like a horse under training for the arena, though she might have an objection to it all the while. On the whole,

Grandcourt got more pleasure out of this notion than he could have done out of winning a girl of whom he was sure that she had a strong inclination for him personally. And yet this pleasure in mastering reluctance flourished along with the habitual persuasion that no woman whom he favoured could be quite indifferent to his personal influence; and it seemed to him not unlikely that by and by Gwendolen might be more enamoured of him than he of her. In any case she would have to submit; and he enjoyed thinking of her as his future wife, whose pride and spirit were suited to command every one but himself. He had no taste for a woman who was all tenderness to him, full of petitioning solicitude and willing obedience. He meant to be master of a woman who would have liked to master him, and who perhaps would have been capable of mastering another man.

Lush, having failed in his attempted reminder to Grandcourt, thought it well to communicate with Sir Hugo, in whom, as a man having perhaps interest enough to command the bestowal of some place where the work was light, gentlemanly, and not ill-paid, he was anxious to cultivate a sense of friendly obligation, not feeling at all secure against the future need of such a place. He wrote the following letter, and addressed it to Park Lane, whither he knew the family had returned from Leubronn: —

My dear Sir Hugo, — Since we came home the marriage has been absolutely decided on, and is to take place in less than three weeks. It is so far the worse for him that her mother has lately lost all her fortune, and he will have to find supplies. Grandcourt,

I know, is feeling the want of cash; and unless some other plan is resorted to, he will be raising money in a foolish way. I am going to leave Diplow immediately, and I shall not be able to start the topic. What I should advise is, that Mr. Deronda, who I know has your confidence, should propose to come and pay a short visit here, according to invitation (there are going to be other people in the house), and that you should put him fully in possession of your wishes and the possible extent of your offer. Then, that he should introduce the subject to Grandcourt so as not to imply that you suspect any particular want of money on his part, but only that there is a strong wish on yours. What I have formerly said to him has been in the way of a conjecture that you might be willing to give a good sum for his chance of Diplow; but if Mr. Deronda came armed with a definite offer, that would take another sort of hold. Ten to one he will not close for some time to come; but the proposal will have got a stronger lodgment in his mind; and though at present he has a great notion of the hunting here, I see a likelihood, under the circumstances, that he will get a distaste for the neighbourhood, and there will be the notion of the money sticking by him without being urged. I would bet on your ultimate success. As I am not to be exiled to Siberia, but am to be within call, it is possible that, by and by, I may be of more service to you. But at present I can think of no medium so good as Mr. Deronda. Nothing puts Grandcourt in worse humour than having the lawyers thrust their papers under his nose uninvited.

Trusting that your visit to Leubronn has put you in excellent condition for the winter, I remain, my dear Sir Hugo, yours very faithfully,

THOMAS CRANMER LUSH.

Sir Hugo, having received this letter at breakfast, handed it to Deronda, who, though he had

chambers in town, was somehow hardly ever in them, Sir Hugo not being contented without him. The chatty baronet would have liked a young companion even if there had been no peculiar reasons for attachment between them: one with a fine harmonious unspoiled face fitted to keep up a cheerful view of posterity and inheritance generally, notwithstanding particular disappointments; and his affection for Deronda was not diminished by the deep-lying though not obtrusive difference in their notions and tastes. Perhaps it was all the stronger; acting as the same sort of difference does between a man and a woman in giving a piquancy to the attachment which subsists in spite of it. Sir Hugo did not think unapprovingly of himself; but he looked at men and society from a liberal-menagerie point of view, and he had a certain pride in Deronda's differing from him, which, if it had found voice, might have said, — "You see this fine young fellow — not such as you see every day, is he? — he belongs to me in a sort of way, I brought him up from a child; but you would not ticket him off easily, he has notions of his own, and he 's as far as the poles asunder from what I was at his age." This state of feeling was kept up by the mental balance in Deronda, who was moved by an affectionateness such as we are apt to call feminine, disposing him to yield in ordinary details, while he had a certain inflexibility of judgment and independence of opinion, held to be rightfully masculine.

When he had read the letter, he returned it without speaking, inwardly wincing under

Lush's mode of attributing a neutral usefulness to him in the family affairs.

"What do you say, Dan? It would be pleasant enough for you. You have not seen the place for a good many years now, and you might have a famous run with the harriers if you went down next week," said Sir Hugo.

"I should not go on that account," said Deronda, buttering his bread attentively. He had an objection to this transparent kind of persuasiveness, which all intelligent animals are seen to treat with indifference. If he went to Diplow, he should be doing something disagreeable to oblige Sir Hugo.

"I think Lush's notion is a good one, and it would be a pity to lose the occasion."

"That is a different matter, — if you think my going of importance to your object," said Deronda, still with that aloofness of manner which implied some suppression. He knew that the baronet had set his heart on the affair.

"Why, you will see the fair gambler, the Leubronn Diana, I should n't wonder," said Sir Hugo, gayly. "We shall have to invite her to the Abbey when they are married, Louisa," he added, turning to Lady Mallinger, as if she too had read the letter.

"I cannot conceive whom you mean," said Lady Mallinger, who in fact had not been listening, her mind having been taken up with her first sips of coffee, the objectionable cuff of her sleeve, and the necessity of carrying Theresa to the dentist, — innocent and partly laudable preoccupations, as the gentle lady's usually were. Should her appearance be inquired after, let it

be said that she had reddish blond hair (the hair of the period), a small Roman nose, rather prominent blue eyes and delicate eyelids, with a figure which her thinner friends called fat, her hands showing curves and dimples like a magnified baby's.

"I mean that Grandcourt is going to marry the girl you saw at Leubronn — don't you remember her? — the Miss Harleth who used to play at roulette."

"Dear me! Is that a good match for him?"

"That depends on the sort of goodness he wants," said Sir Hugo, smiling. "However, she and her friends have nothing, and she will bring him expenses. It 's a good match for my purposes, because if I am willing to fork out a sum of money, he may be willing to give up his chance of Diplow, so that we shall have it out and out, and when I die you will have the consolation of going to the place you would like to go to — wherever I may go."

"I wish you would not talk of dying in that light way, dear."

"It 's rather a heavy way, Lou, for I shall have to pay a heavy sum, — forty thousand, at least."

"But why are we to invite them to the Abbey?" said Lady Mallinger. "I do *not* like women who gamble, like Lady Cragstone."

"Oh, you will not mind her for a week. Besides, she is not like Lady Cragstone because she gambled a little, any more than I am like a broker because I 'm a Whig. I want to keep Grandcourt in good humour, and to let him see plenty of this place, that he may think the less

of Diplow. I don't know yet whether I shall get him to meet me in this matter. And if Dan were to go over on a visit there, he might hold out the bait to him. It would be doing me a great service." This was meant for Deronda.

"Daniel is not fond of Mr. Grandcourt, I think, is he?" said Lady Mallinger, looking at Deronda inquiringly.

"There is no avoiding everybody one does n't happen to be fond of," said Deronda. "I will go to Diplow — I don't know that I have anything better to do — since Sir Hugo wishes it."

"That 's a trump!" said Sir Hugo, well pleased. "And if you don't find it very pleasant, it 's so much experience. Nothing used to come amiss to me when I was young. You must see men and manners."

"Yes; but I have seen that man, and something of his manners too," said Deronda.

"Not nice manners, I think," said Lady Mallinger.

"Well, you see they succeed with your sex," said Sir Hugo, provokingly. "And he was an uncommon good-looking fellow when he was two or three and twenty — like his father. He does n't take after his father in marrying the heiress, though. If he had got Miss Arrowpoint and my land too, confound him, he would have had a fine principality."

Deronda, in anticipating the projected visit, felt less disinclination than when consenting to it. The story of that girl's marriage did interest him: what he had heard through Lush of her having run away from the suit of the man she was now going to take as a husband, had thrown

a new sort of light on her gambling; and it was probably the transition from that favoured worldliness into poverty which had urged her acceptance where she must in some way have felt repulsion. All this implied a nature liable to difficulty and struggle, — elements of life which had a predominant attraction for his sympathy, due perhaps to his early pain in dwelling on the conjectured story of his own existence. Persons attracted him, as Hans Meyrick had done, in proportion to the possibility of his defending them, rescuing them, telling upon their lives with some sort of redeeming influence; and he had to resist an inclination, easily accounted for, to withdraw coldly from the fortunate. But in the movement which had led him to repurchase Gwendolen's necklace for her, and which was at work in him still, there was something beyond his habitual compassionate fervour, — something due to the fascination of her womanhood. He was very open to that sort of charm, and mingled it with the consciously Utopian pictures of his own future; yet any one able to trace the folds of his character might have conceived that he would be more likely than many less passionate men to love a woman without telling her of it. Sprinkle food before a delicate-eared bird: there is nothing he would more willingly take, yet he keeps aloof, because of his sensibility to checks which to you are imperceptible. And one man differs from another, as we all differ from the Bosjesman, in a sensibility to checks, that come from variety of needs, spiritual or other. It seemed to foreshadow that capability of reticence in Deronda that his

imagination was much occupied with two women, to neither of whom would he have held it possible that he should ever make love. Hans Meyrick had laughed at him for having something of the knight-errant in his disposition; and he would have found his proof if he had known what was just now going on in Deronda's mind about Mirah and Gwendolen.

Deronda wrote without delay to announce the visit to Diplow, and received in reply a polite assurance that his coming would give great pleasure. That was not altogether untrue. Grandcourt thought it probable that the visit was prompted by Sir Hugo's desire to court him for a purpose which he did not make up his mind to resist; and it was not a disagreeable idea to him that this fine fellow, whom he believed to be his cousin under the rose, would witness, perhaps with some jealousy, Henleigh Mallinger Grandcourt play the commanding part of betrothed lover to a splendid girl whom the cousin had already looked at with admiration.

Grandcourt himself was not jealous of anything unless it threatened his mastery, — which he did not think himself likely to lose.

CHAPTER II

Surely whoever speaks to me in the right voice,
him or her I shall follow,
As the water follows the moon, silently,
with fluid steps anywhere around the globe.

WALT WHITMAN.

"NOW my cousins are at Diplow," said Grandcourt, "will you go there? — to-morrow? The carriage shall come for Mrs. Davilow. You can tell me what you would like done in the rooms. Things must be put in decent order while we are away at Ryelands. And to-morrow is the only day."

He was sitting sideways on a sofa in the drawing-room at Offendene, one hand and elbow resting on the back, and the other hand thrust between his crossed knees — in the attitude of a man who is much interested in watching the person next to him. Gwendolen, who had always disliked needle-work, had taken to it with apparent zeal since her engagement, and now held a piece of white embroidery which on examination would have shown many false stitches. During the last eight or nine days their hours had been chiefly spent on horseback, but some margin had always been left for this more difficult sort of companionship, which, however, Gwendolen had not found disagreeable. She was very well satisfied with Grandcourt. His answers to her lively questions about what he had seen and done in his life, bore drawling very well. From the first she had noticed that

he knew what to say; and she was constantly feeling not only that he had nothing of the fool in his composition, but that by some subtle means he communicated to her the impression that all the folly lay with other people, who did what he did not care to do. A man who seems to have been able to command the best, has a sovereign power of depreciation. Then Grandcourt's behaviour as a lover had hardly at all passed the limit of an amorous homage which was inobtrusive as a wafted odour of roses, and spent all its effect in a gratified vanity. One day, indeed, he had kissed, not her cheek, but her neck a little below her ear; and Gwendolen, taken by surprise, had started up with a marked agitation which made him rise too, and say, "I beg your pardon — did I annoy you?" "Oh, it was nothing," said Gwendolen, rather afraid of herself, "only I cannot bear — to be kissed under my ear." She sat down again with a little playful laugh, but all the while she felt her heart beating with a vague fear: she was no longer at liberty to flout him as she had flouted poor Rex. Her agitation seemed not uncomplimentary, and he had been contented not to transgress again.

To-day a slight rain hindered riding; but to compensate, a package had come from London, and Mrs. Davilow had just left the room after bringing in for admiration the beautiful things (of Grandcourt's ordering) which lay scattered about on the tables. Gwendolen was just then enjoying the scenery of her life. She let her hands fall on her lap, and said with a pretty air of perversity, —

"Why is to-morrow the only day?"

"Because the next day is the first with the hounds," said Grandcourt.

"And after that?"

"After that I must go away for a couple of days — it 's a bore — but I shall go one day and come back the next." Grandcourt noticed a change in her face, and releasing his hand from under his knees, he laid it on hers, and said, "You object to my going away?"

"It is no use objecting," said Gwendolen, coldly. She was resisting to the utmost her temptation to tell him that she suspected to whom he was going — and the temptation to make a clean breast, speaking without restraint.

"Yes, it is," said Grandcourt, enfolding her hand. "I will put off going. And I will travel at night, so as only to be away one day." He thought that he knew the reason of what he inwardly called this bit of temper, and she was particularly fascinating to him at this moment.

"Then don't put off going, but travel at night," said Gwendolen, feeling that she could command him, and finding in this peremptoriness a small outlet for her irritation.

"Then you will go to Diplow, to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes, if you wish it," said Gwendolen, in a high tone of careless assent. Her concentration in other feelings had really hindered her from taking notice that her hand was being held.

"How you treat us poor devils of men!" said Grandcourt, lowering his tone. "We are always getting the worst of it."

"*Are* you?" said Gwendolen, in a tone of

inquiry, looking at him more naïvely than usual. She longed to believe this commonplace *badinage* as the serious truth about her lover: in that case she, too, was justified. If she knew everything, Mrs. Glasher would appear more blamable than Grandcourt. "*Are* you always getting the worst?"

"Yes. Are you as kind to me as I am to you?" said Grandcourt, looking into her eyes with his narrow gaze.

Gwendolen felt herself stricken. She was conscious of having received so much that her sense of command was checked, and sank away in the perception that, look around her as she might, she could not turn back: it was as if she had consented to mount a chariot where another held the reins; and it was not in her nature to leap out in the eyes of the world. She had not consented in ignorance, and all she could say now would be a confession that she had not been ignorant. Her right to explanation was gone. All she had to do now was to adjust herself, so that the spikes of that unwilling penance which conscience imposed should not gall her. With a sort of mental shiver, she resolutely changed her mental attitude. There had been a little pause, during which she had not turned away her eyes; and with a sudden break into a smile, she said, —

"If I were as kind to you as you are to me, that would spoil your generosity; it would no longer be as great as it could be — and it is that now."

"Then I am not to ask for one kiss," said Grandcourt, contented to pay a large price for

this new kind of love-making, which introduced marriage by the finest contrast.

"Not one!" said Gwendolen, getting saucy, and nodding at him defiantly.

He lifted her little left hand to his lips, and then released it respectfully. Clearly it was faint praise to say of him that he was not disgusting: he was almost charming; and she felt at this moment that it was not likely she could ever have loved another man better than this one. His reticence gave her some inexplicable, delightful consciousness.

"Apropos," she said, taking up her work again, "is there any one besides Captain and Mrs. Torrington at Diplow? — or do you leave them *tête-à-tête?* I suppose he converses in cigars, and she answers with her chignon."

"She has a sister with her," said Grandcourt, with his shadow of a smile, "and there are two men besides, — one of them you know, I believe."

"Ah, then, I have a poor opinion of him," said Gwendolen, shaking her head.

"You saw him at Leubronn, — young Deronda, — a young fellow with the Mallingers."

Gwendolen felt as if her heart were making a sudden gambol; and her fingers, which tried to keep a firm hold on her work, got cold.

"I never spoke to him," she said, dreading any discernible change in herself. "Is he not disagreeable?"

"No, not particularly," said Grandcourt, in his most languid way. "He thinks a little too much of himself. I thought he had been introduced to you."

"No. Some one told me his name the evening before I came away; that was all. What is he?"

"A sort of ward of Sir Hugo Mallinger's. Nothing of any consequence."

"Oh, poor creature! How very unpleasant for him!" said Gwendolen, speaking from the lip, and not meaning any sarcasm. "I wonder if it has left off raining!" she added, rising and going to look out of the window.

Happily it did not rain the next day, and Gwendolen rode to Diplow on Criterion as she had done on that former day when she returned with her mother in the carriage. She always felt the more daring for being in her riding-dress; besides having the agreeable belief that she looked as well as possible in it, — a sustaining consciousness in any meeting which seems formidable. Her anger towards Deronda had changed into a superstitious dread, — due, perhaps, to the coercion he had exercised over her thought, — lest that first interference of his in her life might foreshadow some future influence. It is of such stuff that superstitions are commonly made: an intense feeling about ourselves which makes the evening star shine at us with a threat, and the blessing of a beggar encourage us. And superstitions carry consequences which often verify their hope or their foreboding.

The time before luncheon was taken up for Gwendolen by going over the rooms with Mrs. Torrington and Mrs. Davilow; and she thought it likely that if she saw Deronda, there would hardly be need for more than a bow between

them. She meant to notice him as little as possible.

And after all she found herself under an inward compulsion too strong for her pride. From the first moment of their being in the room together, she seemed to herself to be doing nothing but notice him; everything else was automatic performance of an habitual part.

When he took his place at lunch, Grandcourt had said, "Deronda, Miss Harleth tells me you were not introduced to her at Leubronn?"

"Miss Harleth hardly remembers me, I imagine," said Deronda, looking at her quite simply, as they bowed. "She was intensely occupied when I saw her."

Now, did he suppose that she had not suspected him of being the person who redeemed her necklace?

"On the contrary. I remember you very well," said Gwendolen, feeling rather nervous, but governing herself and looking at him in return with new examination. "You did not approve of my playing at roulette."

"How did you come to that conclusion?" said Deronda, gravely.

"Oh, you cast an evil eye on my play," said Gwendolen, with a turn of her head and a smile. "I began to lose as soon as you came to look on. I had always been winning till then."

"Roulette in such a kennel as Leubronn is a horrid bore," said Grandcourt.

"*I* found it a bore when I began to lose," said Gwendolen. Her face was turned towards Grandcourt as she smiled and spoke, but she

gave a side-long glance at Deronda, and saw his eyes fixed on her with a look so gravely penetrating that it had a keener edge for her than his ironical smile at her losses, — a keener edge than Klesmer's judgment. She wheeled her neck round as if she wanted to listen to what was being said by the rest, while she was only thinking of Deronda. His face had that disturbing kind of form and expression which threatens to affect opinion, — as if one's standard were somehow wrong. (Who has not seen men with faces of this corrective power till they frustrated it by speech or action?) His voice, heard now for the first time, was to Grandcourt's toneless drawl, which had been in her ears every day, as the deep notes of a violoncello to the broken discourse of poultry and other lazy gentry in the afternoon sunshine. Grandcourt, she inwardly conjectured, was perhaps right in saying that Deronda thought too much of himself, — a favourite way of explaining a superiority that humiliates. However, the talk turned on the rinderpest and Jamaica, and no more was said about roulette. Grandcourt held that the Jamaican negro was a beastly sort of baptist Caliban; Deronda said he had always felt a little with Caliban, who naturally had his own point of view and could sing a good song; Mrs. Davilow observed that her father had an estate in Barbadoes, but that she herself had never been in the West Indies; Mrs. Torrington was sure she should never sleep in her bed if she lived among blacks; her husband corrected her by saying that the blacks would be manageable enough if it were not for the half-

breeds; and Deronda remarked that the whites had to thank themselves for the half-breeds.

While this polite pea-shooting was going on, Gwendolen trifled with her jelly, and looked at every speaker in turn that she might feel at ease in looking at Deronda.

"I wonder what he thinks of me really? He must have felt interested in me, else he would not have sent me my necklace. I wonder what he thinks of my marriage? What notions has he to make him so grave about things? Why is he come to Diplow?"

These questions ran in her mind as the voice of an uneasy longing to be judged by Deronda with unmixed admiration, — a longing which had had its seed in her first resentment at his critical glance. Why did she care so much about the opinion of this man who was "nothing of any consequence"? She had no time to find the reason, — she was too much engaged in caring. In the drawing-room, when something had called Grandcourt away, she went quite unpremeditatedly up to Deronda, who was standing at a table apart, turning over some prints, and said to him, —

"Shall you hunt to-morrow, Mr. Deronda?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"You don't object to hunting, then?"

"I find excuses for it. It is a sin I am inclined to, — when I can't get boating or cricketing."

"Do you object to my hunting?" said Gwendolen, with a saucy movement of the chin.

"I have no right to object to anything you choose to do."

"You thought you had a right to object to my gambling," persisted Gwendolen.

"I was sorry for it. I am not aware that I told you of my objection," said Deronda, with his usual directness of gaze, — a large-eyed gravity, innocent of any intention. His eyes had a peculiarity which has drawn many men into trouble; they were of a dark yet mild intensity, which seemed to express a special interest in every one on whom he fixed them, and might easily help to bring on him those claims which ardently sympathetic people are often creating in the minds of those who need help. In mendicant fashion, we make the goodness of others a reason for exorbitant demands on them. That sort of effect was penetrating Gwendolen.

"You hindered me from gambling again," she answered. But she had no sooner spoken than she blushed over face and neck; and Deronda blushed too, conscious that in the little affair of the necklace he had taken a questionable freedom.

It was impossible to speak further; and she turned away to a window, feeling that she had stupidly said what she had not meant to say, and yet being rather happy that she had plunged into this mutual understanding. Deronda also did not dislike it. Gwendolen seemed more decidedly attractive than before; and certainly there had been changes going on within her since that time at Leubronn: the struggle of mind attending a conscious error had wakened something like a new soul, which had better, but also worse, possibilities than her former poise

of crude self-confidence: among the forces she had come to dread was something within her that troubled satisfaction.

That evening Mrs. Davilow said, "Was it really so, or only a joke of yours, about Mr. Deronda's spoiling your play, Gwen?"

Her curiosity had been excited, and she could venture to ask a question that did not concern Mr. Grandcourt.

"Oh, it merely happened that he was looking on when I began to lose," said Gwendolen, carelessly. "I noticed him."

"I don't wonder at that: he is a striking young man. He puts me in mind of Italian paintings. One would guess, without being told, that there was foreign blood in his veins."

"Is there?" said Gwendolen.

"Mrs. Torrington says so. I asked particularly who he was, and she told me that his mother was some foreigner of high rank."

"His mother?" said Gwendolen, rather sharply. "Then who was his father?"

"Well — every one says he is the son of Sir Hugo Mallinger, who brought him up; though he passes for a ward. She says, if Sir Hugo Mallinger could have done as he liked with his estates he would have left them to this Mr. Deronda, since he has no legitimate son."

Gwendolen was silent; but her mother observed so marked an effect in her face that she was angry with herself for having repeated Mrs. Torrington's gossip. It seemed, on reflection, unsuited to the ear of her daughter, for whom Mrs. Davilow disliked what is called knowledge

of the world; and indeed she wished that she herself had not had any of it thrust upon her.

An image which had immediately arisen in Gwendolen's mind was that of the unknown mother, — no doubt a dark-eyed woman, — probably sad. Hardly any face could be less like Deronda's than that represented as Sir Hugo's in a crayon portrait at Diplow. A dark-eyed beautiful woman, no longer young, had become " stuff o' the conscience " to Gwendolen.

That night when she had got into her little bed, and only a dim light was burning, she said, —

" Mamma, have men generally children before they are married? "

" No, dear, no," said Mrs. Davilow. " Why do you ask such a question? " (But she began to think that she saw the why.)

" If it were so, I ought to know," said Gwendolen, with some indignation.

" You are thinking of what I said about Mr. Deronda and Sir Hugo Mallinger. That is a very unusual case, dear."

" Does Lady Mallinger know? "

" She knows enough to satisfy her. That is quite clear, because Mr. Deronda has lived with them."

" And people think no worse of him? "

" Well, of course he is under some disadvantage: it is not as if he were Lady Mallinger's son. He does not inherit the property, and he is not of any consequence in the world. But people are not obliged to know anything about his birth; you see, he is very well received."

"I wonder whether he knows about it; and whether he is angry with his father?"

"My dear child, why should you think of that?"

"Why?" said Gwendolen, impetuously, sitting up in her bed. "Have n't children reason to be angry with their parents? How can they help their parents marrying or not marrying?"

But a consciousness rushed upon her, which made her fall back again on her pillow. It was not only what she would have felt months before, — that she might seem to be reproaching her mother for that second marriage of hers; what she chiefly felt now was, that she had been led on to a condemnation which seemed to make her own marriage a forbidden thing.

There was no further talk, and till sleep came over her, Gwendolen lay struggling with the reasons against that marriage, — reasons which pressed upon her newly now that they were unexpectedly mirrored in the story of a man whose slight relations with her had, by some hidden affinity, bitten themselves into the most permanent layers of feeling. It was characteristic that, with all her debating, she was never troubled by the question whether the indefensibleness of her marriage did not include the fact that she had accepted Grandcourt solely as the man whom it was convenient for her to marry, not in the least as one to whom she would be binding herself in duty. Gwendolen's ideas were pitiably crude; but many grand difficulties of life are apt to force themselves on us in our crudity. And to judge wisely I suppose we must know how things appear to the unwise; that kind of

appearance making the larger part of the world's history.

In the morning there was a double excitement for her. She was going to hunt, from which scruples about propriety had threatened to hinder her, until it was found that Mrs. Torrington was horse-woman enough to accompany her, — going to hunt for the first time since her escapade with Rex; and she was going again to see Deronda, in whom, since last night, her interest had so gathered that she expected, as people do about revealed celebrities, to see something in his appearance which she had missed before. What was he going to be? What sort of life had he before him, — he being nothing of any consequence? And with only a little difference in events he might have been as important as Grandcourt, nay, — her imagination inevitably went in that direction, — might have held the very estates which Grandcourt was to have. But now Deronda would probably some day see her mistress of the Abbey at Topping, see her bearing the title which would have been his own wife's. These obvious, futile thoughts of what might have been, made a new epoch for Gwendolen. She, whose unquestioning habit it had been to take the best that came to her for less than her own claim, had now to see the position which tempted her in a new light, as a hard, unfair exclusion of others. What she had now heard about Deronda seemed to her imagination to throw him into one group with Mrs. Glasher and her children; before whom she felt herself in an attitude of apology, — she who had hitherto been surrounded by a group that in her

opinion had need be apologetic to her. Perhaps Deronda himself was thinking of these things. Could he know of Mrs. Glasher? If he knew that she knew, he would despise her; but he could have no such knowledge. Would he, without that, despise her for marrying Grandcourt? His possible judgment of her actions was telling on her as importunately as Klesmer's judgment of her powers; but she found larger room for resistance to a disapproval of her marriage, because it is easier to make our conduct seem justifiable to ourselves than to make our ability strike others. "How can I help it?" is not our favourite apology for incompetence. But Gwendolen felt some strength in saying, —

"How can I help what other people have done? Things would not come right if I were to turn round now and declare that I would not marry Mr. Grandcourt." And such turning round was out of the question. The horses in the chariot she had mounted were going at full speed.

This mood of youthful, elated desperation had a tidal recurrence. She could dare anything that lay before her sooner than she could choose to go backward into humiliation; and it was even soothing to think that there would now be as much ill-doing in the one as in the other. But the immediate delightful fact was the hunt, where she would see Deronda, and where he would see her; for always lurking ready to obtrude before other thoughts about him was the impression that he was very much interested in her. But to-day she was resolved not to repeat

her folly of yesterday, as if she were anxious to say anything to him. Indeed, the hunt would be too absorbing.

And so it was for a long while. Deronda was there, and within her sight very often; but this only added to the stimulus of a pleasure which Gwendolen had only once before tasted, and which seemed likely always to give a delight independent of any crosses, except such as took away the chance of riding. No accident happened to throw them together; the run took them within convenient reach of home, and in the agreeable sombreness of the gray November afternoon, with a long stratum of yellow light in the west, Gwendolen was returning with the company from Diplow, who were attending her on the way to Offendene. Now that the sense of glorious excitement was over and gone, she was getting irritably disappointed that she had had no opportunity of speaking to Deronda, whom she would not see again, since he was to go away in a couple of days. What was she going to say? That was not quite certain. She wanted to speak to him. Grandcourt was by her side; Mrs. Torrington, her husband, and another gentleman in advance; and Deronda's horse she could hear behind. The wish to speak to him and have him speaking to her was becoming imperious; and there was no chance of it unless she simply asserted her will and defied everything. Where the order of things could give way to Miss Gwendolen, it must be made to do so. They had lately emerged from a wood of pines and beeches, where the twilight stillness had a repressing effect, which increased her im-

patience. The horse-hoofs again heard behind at some little distance were a growing irritation. She reined in her horse and looked behind her; Grandcourt, after a few paces, also paused; but she, waving her whip and nodding sideways with playful imperiousness, said "Go on! I want to speak to Mr. Deronda."

Grandcourt hesitated; but that he would have done after any proposition. It was an awkward situation for him. No gentleman, before marriage, could give the emphasis of refusal to a command delivered in this playful way. He rode on slowly, and she waited till Deronda came up. He looked at her with tacit inquiry, and she said at once, letting her horse go alongside of his, —

"Mr. Deronda, you must enlighten my ignorance. I want to know why you thought it wrong for me to gamble. Is it because I am a woman?"

"Not altogether; but I regretted it the more because you were a woman," said Deronda, with an irrepressible smile. Apparently it must be understood between them now that it was he who sent the necklace. "I think it would be better for men not to gamble. It is a besotting kind of taste, likely to turn into a disease. And, besides, there is something revolting to me in raking a heap of money together, and internally chuckling over it, when others are feeling the loss of it. I should even call it base, if it were more than an exceptional lapse. There are enough inevitable turns of fortune which force us to see that our gain is another's loss; that is one of the ugly aspects of life. One would like

to reduce it as much as one could, not get amusement out of exaggerating it." Deronda's voice had gathered some indignation while he was speaking.

"But you do admit that we can't help things," said Gwendolen, with a drop in her tone. The answer had not been anything like what she had expected. "I mean that things are so in spite of us; we can't always help it that our gain is another's loss."

"Clearly. Because of that, we should help it where we can."

Gwendolen, biting her lip inside, paused a moment, and then forcing herself to speak with an air of playfulness again, said, —

"But why should you regret it more because I am a woman?"

"Perhaps because we need that you should be better than we are."

"But suppose *we* need that men should be better than we are," said Gwendolen, with a little air of "check!"

"That is rather a difficulty," said Deronda, smiling. "I suppose I should have said, we each of us think it would be better for the other to be good."

"You see, I needed you to be better than I was — and you thought so," said Gwendolen, nodding and laughing, while she put her horse forward and joined Grandcourt, who made no observation.

"Don't you want to know what I had to say to Mr. Deronda?" said Gwendolen, whose own pride required her to account for her conduct.

"A — no," said Grandcourt, coldly.

"Now, that is the first impolite word you have spoken, — that you don't wish to hear what I had to say," said Gwendolen, playing at a pout.

"I wish to hear what you say to me — not to other men," said Grandcourt.

"Then you wish to hear this. I wanted to make him tell me why he objected to my gambling, and he gave me a little sermon."

"Yes, — but excuse me the sermon." If Gwendolen imagined that Grandcourt cared about her speaking to Deronda, he wished her to understand that she was mistaken. But he was not fond of being told to ride on. She saw he was piqued, but did not mind. She had accomplished her object of speaking again to Deronda before he raised his hat and turned with the rest towards Diplow, while her lover attended her to Offendene, where he was to bid farewell before a whole day's absence on the unspecified journey. Grandcourt had spoken truth in calling the journey a bore: he was going by train to Gadsmere.

CHAPTER III

"No penitence and no confessional:
No priest ordains it, yet they're forced to sit
Amid deep ashes of their vanished years."

IMAGINE a rambling, patchy house, the best part built of gray stone, and red-tiled, a round tower jutting at one of the corners, the mellow darkness of its conical roof surmounted by a weather-cock making an agreeable object either amidst the gleams and greenth of summer or the low-hanging clouds and snowy branches of winter: the ground shady with spreading trees: a great cedar flourishing on one side, backward some Scotch firs on a broken bank where the roots hung naked, and beyond, a rookery: on the other side a pool overhung with bushes, where the water-fowl fluttered and screamed: all around, a vast meadow which might be called a park, bordered by an old plantation and guarded by stone lodges which looked like little prisons. Outside the gate the country, once entirely rural and lovely, now black with coal-mines, was chiefly peopled by men and brethren with candles stuck in their hats, and with a diabolic complexion which laid them peculiarly open to suspicion in the eyes of the children of Gadsmere, — Mrs. Glasher's four beautiful children, who had dwelt there for about three years. Now, in November, when the flower-beds were empty, the trees leafless, and the pool blackly shivering, one might have

said that the place was sombrely in keeping with the black roads and black mounds which seemed to put the district in mourning; — except when the children were playing on the gravel with the dogs for their companions. But Mrs. Glasher under her present circumstances liked Gadsmere as well as she would have liked any other abode. The complete seclusion of the place, which the unattractiveness of the country secured, was exactly to her taste. When she drove her two ponies with a wagonet full of children, there were no gentry in carriages to be met, only men of business in gigs; at church there were no eyes she cared to avoid, for the curate's wife and the curate himself were either ignorant of anything to her disadvantage, or ignored it: to them she was simply a widow lady, the tenant of Gadsmere; and the name of Grandcourt was of little interest in that district compared with the names of Fletcher and Gawcome, the lessees of the collieries.

It was full ten years since the elopement of an Irish officer's beautiful wife with young Grandcourt, and a consequent duel where the bullets wounded the air only, had made some little noise. Most of those who remembered the affair now wondered what had become of that Mrs. Glasher whose beauty and brilliancy had made her rather conspicuous to them in foreign places, where she was known to be living with young Grandcourt.

That he should have disentangled himself from that connection seemed only natural and desirable. As to her, it was thought that a woman who was understood to have forsaken

her child along with her husband had probably sunk lower. Grandcourt had of course got weary of her. He was much given to the pursuit of women: but a man in his position would by this time desire to make a suitable marriage with the fair young daughter of a noble house. No one talked of Mrs. Glasher now, any more than they talked of the victim in a trial for manslaughter ten years before: she was a lost vessel after whom nobody would send out an expedition of search; but Grandcourt was seen in harbour with his colours flying registered as seaworthy as ever.

Yet, in fact, Grandcourt had never disentangled himself from Mrs. Glasher. His passion for her had been the strongest and most lasting he had ever known; and though it was now as dead as the music of a cracked flute, it had left a certain dull disposedness, which on the death of her husband three years before had prompted in him a vacillating notion of marrying her, in accordance with the understanding often expressed between them during the days of his first ardour. At that early time Grandcourt would willingly have paid for the freedom to be won by a divorce; but the husband would not oblige him, not wanting to be married again himself, and not wishing to have his domestic habits printed in evidence.

The altered poise which the years had brought in Mrs. Glasher was just the reverse. At first she was comparatively careless about the possibility of marriage. It was enough that she had escaped from a disagreeable husband and found a sort of bliss with a lover who had completely

fascinated her, — young, handsome, amorous, and living in the best style, with equipage and conversation of the kind to be expected in young men of fortune who have seen everything. She was an impassioned, vivacious woman, fond of adoration, exasperated by five years of marital rudeness; and the sense of release was so strong upon her that it stilled anxiety for more than she actually enjoyed. An equivocal position was of no importance to her then; she had no envy for the honours of a dull disregarded wife: the one spot which spoiled her vision of her new pleasant world, was the sense that she had left her three-year-old boy, who died two years afterwards, and whose first tones saying "Mamma" retained a difference from those of the children that came after. But now the years had brought many changes besides those in the contour of her cheek and throat; and that Grandcourt should marry her had become her dominant desire. The equivocal position which she had not minded about for herself was now telling upon her through her children, whom she loved with a devotion charged with the added passion of atonement. She had no repentance except in this direction. If Grandcourt married her, the children would be none the worse off for what had passed: they would see their mother in a dignified position, and they would be at no disadvantage with the world: her son could be made his father's heir. It was the yearning for this result which gave the supreme importance to Grandcourt's feeling for her; her love for him had long resolved itself into anxiety that he should give her the unique, permanent

claim of a wife, and she expected no other happiness in marriage than the satisfaction of her maternal love and pride, — including her pride for herself in the presence of her children. For the sake of that result she was prepared even with a tragic firmness to endure anything quietly in marriage; and she had had acuteness enough to cherish Grandcourt's flickering purpose negatively, by not molesting him with passionate appeals and with scene-making. In her, as in every one else who wanted anything of him, his incalculable turns, and his tendency to harden under beseeching, had created a reasonable dread, — a slow discovery, of which no presentiment had been given in the bearing of a youthful lover with a fine line of face and the softest manners. But reticence had necessarily cost something to this impassioned woman, and she was the bitterer for it. There is no quailing — even that forced on the helpless and injured — which has not an ugly obverse: the withheld sting was gathering venom. She was absolutely dependent on Grandcourt; for though he had been always liberal in expenses for her, he had kept everything voluntary on his part; and with the goal of marriage before her, she would ask for nothing less. He had said that he would never settle anything except by will; and when she was thinking of alternatives for the future, it often occurred to her that, even if she did not become Grandcourt's wife, he might never have a son who would have a legitimate claim on him, and the end might be that her son would be made heir to the best part of his estates. No son at that early age could promise to have more of his

father's *physique*. But her becoming Grandcourt's wife was so far from being an extravagant notion of possibility, that even Lush had entertained it, and had said that he would as soon bet on it as on any other likelihood with regard to his familiar companion. Lush, indeed, on inferring that Grandcourt had a preconception of using his residence at Diplow in order to win Miss Arrowpoint, had thought it well to fan that project, taking it as a tacit renunciation of the marriage with Mrs. Glasher, which had long been a mark for the hovering and wheeling of Grandcourt's caprice. But both prospects had been negatived by Gwendolen's appearance on the scene; and it was natural enough for Mrs. Glasher to enter with eagerness into Lush's plan of hindering that new danger by setting up a barrier in the mind of the girl who was being sought as a bride. She entered into it with an eagerness which had passion in it as well as purpose, some of the stored-up venom delivering itself in that way.

After that, she had heard from Lush of Gwendolen's departure, and the probability that all danger from her was got rid of; but there had been no letter to tell her that the danger had returned and had become a certainty. She had since then written to Grandcourt as she did habitually, and he had been longer than usual in answering. She was inferring that he might intend coming to Gadsmere at the time when he was actually on the way; and she was not without hope — what construction of another's mind is not strong wishing equal to? — that a certain sickening from that frustrated courtship might

dispose him to slip the more easily into the old track of intention.

Grandcourt had two grave purposes in coming to Gadsmere: to convey the news of his approaching marriage in person, in order to make this first difficulty final; and to get from Lydia his mother's diamonds, which long ago he had confided to her and wished her to wear. Her person suited diamonds, and made them look as if they were worth some of the money given for them. These particular diamonds were not mountains of light, — they were mere peas and haricots for the ears, neck, and hair; but they were worth some thousands, and Grandcourt necessarily wished to have them for his wife. Formerly when he had asked Lydia to put them into his keeping again, simply on the ground that they would be safer and ought to be deposited at the bank, she had quietly but absolutely refused, declaring that they were quite safe; and at last had said, "If you ever marry another woman I will give them up to her: are you going to marry another woman?" At that time Grandcourt had no motive which urged him to persist; and he had this grace in him, that the disposition to exercise power either by cowing or disappointing others or exciting in them a rage which they dared not express, — a disposition which was active in him as other propensities became languid, — had always been in abeyance before Lydia. A severe interpreter might say that the mere facts of their relation to each other, the melancholy position of this woman who depended on his will, made a standing banquet for his delight in dominating. But

there was something else than this in his forbearance towards her: there was the surviving though metamorphosed effect of the power she had had over him; and it was this effect, the fitful dull lapse towards solicitations that once had the zest now missing from life, which had again and again inclined him to espouse a familiar past rather than rouse himself to the expectation of novelty. But now novelty had taken hold of him and urged him to make the most of it.

Mrs. Glasher was seated in the pleasant room where she habitually passed her mornings with her children round her. It had a square projecting window and looked on broad gravel and grass, sloping towards a little brook that entered the pool. The top of a low black cabinet, the old oak table, the chairs in tawny leather, were littered with the children's toys, books, and garden garments, at which a maternal lady in pastel looked down from the walls with smiling indulgence. The children were all there. The three girls, seated round their mother near the window, were miniature portraits of her, — dark-eyed, delicate-featured brunettes with a rich bloom on their cheeks, their little nostrils and eyebrows singularly finished as if they were tiny women, the eldest being barely nine. The boy was seated on the carpet at some distance, bending his blond head over the animals from a Noah's ark, admonishing them separately in a voice of threatening command, and occasionally licking the spotted ones to see if the colours would hold. Josephine, the eldest, was having her French lesson; and the others, with their

dolls on their laps, sat demurely enough for images of the Madonna. Mrs. Glasher's toilet had been made very carefully, — each day now she said to herself that Grandcourt might come in. Her head, which, spite of emaciation, had an ineffaceable beauty in the fine profile, crisp curves of hair, and clearly marked eyebrows, rose impressively above her bronze-coloured silk and velvet, and the gold necklace which Grandcourt had first clasped round her neck years ago. Not that she had any pleasure in her toilet; her chief thought of herself seen in the glass was, "How changed!" — but such good in life as remained to her she would keep. If her chief wish were fulfilled, she could imagine herself getting the comeliness of a matron fit for the highest rank. The little faces beside her, almost exact reductions of her own, seemed to tell of the blooming curves which had once been where now was sunken pallor. But the children kissed the pale cheeks, and never found them deficient. That love was now the one end of her life.

Suddenly Mrs. Glasher turned away her head from Josephine's book and listened. "Hush, dear! I think some one is coming."

Henleigh the boy jumped up and said, "Mamma, is it the miller with my donkey?"

He got no answer, and going up to his mamma's knee, repeated his question in an insistent tone. But the door opened, and the servant announced Mr. Grandcourt. Mrs. Glasher rose in some agitation. Henleigh frowned at him in disgust at his not being the miller, and the three little girls lifted up their dark eyes to

him timidly. They had none of them any particular liking for this friend of mamma's, — in fact, when he had taken Mrs. Glasher's hand and then turned to put his other hand on Henleigh's head, that energetic scion began to beat the friend's arm away with his fists. The little girls submitted bashfully to be patted under the chin and kissed, but on the whole it seemed better to send them into the garden, where they were presently dancing and chatting with the dogs on the gravel.

"How far are you come?" said Mrs. Glasher, as Grandcourt put away his hat and overcoat.

"From Diplow," he answered slowly, seating himself opposite her and looking at her with an unnoting gaze which she noted.

"You are tired, then."

"No, I rested at the Junction, — a hideous hole. These railway journeys are always a confounded bore. But I had coffee and smoked."

Grandcourt drew out his handkerchief, rubbed his face, and in returning the handkerchief to his pocket looked at his crossed knee and blameless boot, as if any stranger were opposite to him, instead of a woman quivering with a suspense which every word and look of his was to incline towards hope or dread. But he was really occupied with their interview and what it was likely to include. Imagine the difference in rate of emotion between this woman whom the years had worn to a more conscious dependence and sharper eagerness, and this man whom they were dulling into a more and more neutral obstinacy.

"I expected to see you — it was so long since

I had heard from you. I suppose the weeks seem longer at Gadsmere than they do at Diplow," said Mrs. Glasher. She had a quick, incisive way of speaking that seemed to go with her features, as the tone and *timbre* of a violin go with its form.

"Yes," drawled Grandcourt. "But you found the money paid into the bank."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Glasher, curtly, tingling with impatience. Always before — at least she fancied so — Grandcourt had taken more notice of her and the children than he did to-day.

"Yes," he resumed, playing with his whisker, and at first not looking at her, "the time has gone on at rather a rattling pace with me; generally it is slow enough. But there has been a good deal happening, as you know" — here he turned his eyes upon her.

"What do I know?" said she, sharply.

He left a pause before he said, without change of manner, "That I was thinking of marrying. You saw Miss Harleth?"

"*She* told you that?"

The pale cheeks looked even paler, perhaps from the fierce brightness in the eyes above them.

"No, Lush told me," was the slow answer. It was as if the thumb-screw and the iron boot were being placed by creeping hands within sight of the expectant victim.

"Good God! say at once that you are going to marry her," she burst out passionately, her knee shaking and her hands tightly clasped.

"Of course, this kind of thing must happen

some time or other, Lydia," said he; really, now the thumb-screw was on, not wishing to make the pain worse.

"You did n't always see the necessity."

"Perhaps not. I see it now."

In those few undertoned words of Grandcourt's she felt as absolute a resistance as if her thin fingers had been pushing at a fast-shut iron door. She knew her helplessness, and shrank from testing it by any appeal, — shrank from crying in a dead ear and clinging to dead knees, only to see the immovable face and feel the rigid limbs. She did not weep nor speak: she was too hard pressed by the sudden certainty which had as much of chill sickness in it as of thought and emotion. The defeated clutch of struggling hope gave her in these first moments a horrible sensation. At last she rose with a spasmodic effort, and, unconscious of everything but her wretchedness, pressed her forehead against the hard cold glass of the window. The children, playing on the gravel, took this as a sign that she wanted them, and running forward stood in front of her with their sweet faces upturned expectantly. This roused her: she shook her head at them, waved them off, and overcome with this painful exertion, sank back in the nearest chair.

Grandcourt had risen too. He was doubly annoyed, — at the scene itself, and at the sense that no imperiousness of his could save him from it; but the task had to be gone through, and there was the administrative necessity of arranging things so that there should be as little annoyance as possible in future. He was lean-

ing against the corner of the fireplace. She looked up at him and said bitterly, —

"All this is of no consequence to you. I and the children are importunate creatures. You wish to get away again and be with Miss Harleth."

"Don't make the affair more disagreeable than it need be, Lydia. It is of no use to harp on things that can't be altered. Of course it 's deucedly disagreeable to me to see you making yourself miserable. I 've taken this journey to tell you what you must make up your mind to; you and the children will be provided for as usual, and there 's an end of it."

Silence. She dared not answer. This woman with the intense eager look had had the iron of the mother's anguish in her soul, and it had made her sometimes capable of a repression harder than shrieking and struggle. But underneath the silence there was an outlash of hatred and vindictiveness: she wished that the marriage might make two others wretched, besides herself. Presently he went on.

"It will be better for you. You may go on living here. But I think of by and by settling a good sum on you and the children, and you can live where you like. There will be nothing for you to complain of then. Whatever happens you will feel secure. Nothing could be done beforehand. Everything has gone on in a hurry."

Grandcourt ceased his slow delivery of sentences. He did not expect her to thank him, but he considered that she might reasonably be contented; if it were possible for Lydia to be

contented. She showed no change, and after a minute he said, —

"You have never had any reason to fear that I should be illiberal. I don't care a curse about the money."

"If you did care about it, I suppose you would not give it us," said Lydia. The sarcasm was irrepressible.

"That 's a devilishly unfair thing to say," Grandcourt replied, in a lower tone; "and I advise you not to say that sort of thing again."

"Should you punish me by leaving the children in beggary?" In spite of herself, the one outlet of venom had brought the other.

"There is no question about leaving the children in beggary," said Grandcourt, still in his low voice. "I advise you not to say things that you will repent of."

"I am used to repenting," said she, bitterly. "Perhaps *you* will repent. You have already repented of loving me."

"All this will only make it uncommonly difficult for us to meet again. What friend have you besides me?"

"Quite true."

The words came like a low moan. At the same moment there flashed through her the wish that after promising himself a better happiness than that he had had with her, he might feel a misery and loneliness which would drive him back to her to find some memory of a time when he was young, glad, and hopeful. But no! he would go scathless; it was she who had to suffer.

With this the scorching words were ended.

Grandcourt had meant to stay till evening; he wished to curtail his visit, but there was no suitable train earlier than the one he had arranged to go by, and he had still to speak to Lydia on the second object of his visit, which like a second surgical operation seemed to require an interval. The hours had to go by; there was eating to be done; the children came in again, — all this mechanism of life had to be gone through with the dreary sense of constraint which is often felt in domestic quarrels of a commoner kind. To Lydia it was some slight relief for her stifled fury to have the children present: she felt a savage glory in their loveliness, as if it would taunt Grandcourt with his indifference to her and them, — a secret darting of venom which was strongly imaginative. He acquitted himself with all the advantage of a man whose grace of bearing has long been moulded on an experience of boredom, — nursed the little Antonia, who sat with her hands crossed and eyes upturned to his bald head, which struck her as worthy of observation, — and propitiated Henleigh by promising him a beautiful saddle and bridle. It was only the two eldest girls who had known him as a continual presence; and the intervening years had overlaid their infantine memories with a bashfulness which Grandcourt's bearing was not likely to dissipate. He and Lydia occasionally, in the presence of the servants, made a conventional remark; otherwise they never spoke; and the stagnant thought in Grandcourt's mind all the while was of his own infatuation in having given her those diamonds, which obliged him to

incur the nuisance of speaking about them. He had an ingrained care for what he held to belong to his caste, and about property he liked to be lordly; also he had a consciousness of indignity to himself in having to ask for anything in the world. But however he might assert his independence of Mrs. Glasher's past, he had made a past for himself which was a stronger yoke than any he could impose. He must ask for the diamonds which he had promised to Gwendolen.

At last they were alone again, with the candles above them, face to face with each other. Grandcourt looked at his watch, and then said, in an apparently indifferent drawl, "There is one thing I had to mention, Lydia. My diamonds, — you have them."

"Yes, I have them," she answered promptly, rising and standing with her arms thrust down and her fingers threaded, while Grandcourt sat still. She had expected the topic, and made her resolve about it. But she meant to carry out her resolve, if possible, without exasperating him. During the hours of silence she had longed to recall the words which had only widened the breach between them.

"They are in this house, I suppose?"

"No; not in this house."

"I thought you said you kept them by you."

"When I said so, it was true. They are in the bank at Dudley."

"Get them away, will you? I must make an arrangement for your delivering them to some one."

"Make no arrangement. They shall be de-

livered to the person you intended them for. *I* will make the arrangement."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say. I have always told you that I would give them up to your wife. I shall keep my word. She is not your wife yet."

"This is foolery," said Grandcourt, with undertoned disgust. It was too irritating that his indulgence of Lydia had given her a sort of mastery over him in spite of her dependent condition.

She did not speak. He also rose now, but stood leaning against the mantelpiece with his side-face towards her.

"The diamonds must be delivered to me before my marriage," he began again.

"What is your wedding-day?"

"The tenth. There is no time to be lost."

"And where do you go after the marriage?"

He did not reply except by looking more sullen. Presently he said, "You must appoint a day before then, to get them from the bank and meet me, — or somebody else I will commission: it 's a great nuisance. Mention a day."

"No; I shall not do that. They shall be delivered to her safely. I shall keep my word."

"Do you mean to say," said Grandcourt, just audibly, turning to face her, "that you will not do as I tell you?"

"Yes, I mean that," was the answer that leaped out, while her eyes flashed close to him. The poor creature was immediately conscious that if her words had any effect on her own lot, the effect must be mischievous, and might nullify

all the remaining advantage of her long patience. But the word had been spoken.

He was in a position the most irritating to him. He could not shake her nor touch her hostilely; and if he could, the process would not bring the diamonds. He shrank from the only sort of threat that would frighten her, — if she believed it. And in general, there was nothing he hated more than to be forced into anything like violence even in words: his will must impose itself without trouble. After looking at her for a moment, he turned his side-face towards her again, leaning as before, and said, —

"Infernal idiots that women are!"

"Why will you not tell me where you are going after the marriage? I could be at the wedding if I liked, and learn in that way," said Lydia, not shrinking from the one suicidal form of threat within her power.

"Of course, if you like, you can play the mad woman," said Grandcourt, with *sotto voce* scorn. "It is not to be supposed that you will wait to think what good will come of it, — or what you owe to me."

He was in a state of disgust and embitterment quite new in the history of their relation to each other. It was undeniable that this woman whose life he had allowed to send such deep suckers into his, had a terrible power of annoyance in her; and the rash hurry of his proceedings had left her opportunities open. His pride saw very ugly possibilities threatening it, and he stood for several minutes in silence reviewing the situation, — considering how he could act upon her. Unlike himself she was of a direct nature, with

certain simple strongly coloured tendencies, and there was one often-experienced effect which he thought he could count upon now. As Sir Hugo had said of him, Grandcourt knew how to play his cards upon occasion.

He did not speak again, but looked at his watch, rang the bell, and ordered the vehicle to be brought round immediately. Then he removed farther from her, walked as if in expectation of a summons, and remained silent without turning his eyes upon her.

She was suffering the horrible conflict of self-reproach and tenacity. She saw beforehand Grandcourt leaving her without even looking at her again, — herself left behind in lonely uncertainty, — hearing nothing from him, — not knowing whether she had done her children harm, — feeling that she had perhaps made him hate her, — all the wretchedness of a creature who had defeated her own motives. And yet she could not bear to give up a purpose which was a sweet morsel to her vindictiveness. If she had not been a mother she would willingly have sacrificed herself to her revenge, — to what she felt to be the justice of hindering another from getting happiness by willingly giving her over to misery. The two dominant passions were at struggle. She must satisfy them both.

"Don't let us part in anger, Henleigh," she began, without changing her place or attitude; "it is a very little thing I ask. If I were refusing to give anything up that you call yours, it would be different; that would be a reason for treating me as if you hated me. But I ask such a little thing. If you will tell me where you are

going on the wedding-day, I will take care that the diamonds shall be delivered to her without scandal. Without scandal," she repeated entreatingly.

"Such preposterous whims make a woman odious," said Grandcourt, not giving way in look or movement. "What is the use of talking to mad people?"

"Yes, I am foolish, — loneliness has made me foolish — indulge me." Sobs rose as she spoke. "If you will indulge me in this one folly, I will be very meek, — I will never trouble you." She burst into hysterical crying, and said again almost with a scream, — "I will be very meek after that."

There was a strange mixture of acting and reality in this passion. She kept hold of her purpose as a child might tighten its hand over a small stolen thing, crying and denying all the while. Even Grandcourt was wrought upon by surprise: this capricious wish, this childish violence, was as unlike Lydia's bearing as it was incongruous with her person. Both had always had a stamp of dignity on them. Yet she seemed more manageable in this state than in her former attitude of defiance. He came close up to her again, and said, in his low imperious tone, "Be quiet, and hear what I tell you. I will never forgive you if you present yourself again and make a scene."

She pressed her handkerchief against her face, and when she could speak firmly said, in the muffled voice that follows sobbing, "I will not, — if you will let me have my way, — I promise you not to thrust myself forward again. I have

never broken my word to you — how many have you broken to me? When you gave me the diamonds to wear, you were not thinking of having another wife. And I now give them up, — I don't reproach you, — I only ask you to let me give them up in my own way. Have I not borne it well? Everything is to be taken away from me, and when I ask for a straw, a chip, — you deny it me." She had spoken rapidly, but after a little pause she said more slowly, her voice freed from its muffled tone: "I will not bear to have it denied me."

Grandcourt had a baffling sense that he had to deal with something like madness; he could only govern by giving way. The servant came to say the fly was ready. When the door was shut again, Grandcourt said sullenly, "We are going to Ryelands, then."

"They shall be delivered to her there," said Lydia, with decision.

"Very well, I am going." He felt no inclination even to take her hand; she had annoyed him too sorely. But now that she had gained her point, she was prepared to humble herself that she might propitiate him.

"Forgive me; I will never vex you again," she said, with beseeching looks. Her inward voice said distinctly, — "It is only I who have to forgive." Yet she was obliged to ask forgiveness.

"You had better keep that promise. You have made me feel uncommonly ill with your folly," said Grandcourt, apparently choosing this statement as the strongest possible use of language.

"Poor thing!" said Lydia, with a faint smile: was he aware of the minor fact that he had made her feel ill this morning?

But with the quick transition natural to her, she was now ready to coax him if he would let her, that they might part in some degree reconciled. She ventured to lay her hand on his shoulder, and he did not move away from her: she had so far succeeded in alarming him, that he was not sorry for these proofs of returned subjection.

"Light a cigar," she said soothingly, taking the case from his breast-pocket and opening it.

Amidst such caressing signs of mutual fear they parted. The effect that clung and gnawed within Grandcourt was a sense of imperfect mastery.

CHAPTER IV

A wild dedication of yourselves
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores.

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the day when Gwendolen Harleth was married and became Mrs. Grandcourt, the morning was clear and bright, and while the sun was low a slight frost crisped the leaves. The bridal party was worth seeing, and half Pennicote turned out to see it, lining the pathway up to the church. An old friend of the Rector's performed the marriage ceremony, the Rector himself acting as father, to the great advantage of the procession. Only two faces, it was remarked, showed signs of sadness, — Mrs. Davilow's and Anna's. The mother's delicate eyelids were pink, as if she had been crying half the night; and no one was surprised that, splendid as the match was, she should feel the parting from a daughter who was the flower of her children and of her own life. It was less understood why Anna should be troubled when she was being so well set off by the bridesmaid's dress. Every one else seemed to reflect the brilliancy of the occasion, — the bride most of all. Of her it was agreed that as to figure and carriage she was worthy to be a "lady o' title;" as to face, perhaps it might be thought that a title required something more rosy; but the bridegroom himself not being fresh-coloured — being indeed, as the miller's wife observed, very much of her own

husband's complexion — the match was the more complete. Anyhow he must be very fond of her; and it was to be hoped that he would never cast it up to her that she had been going out to service as a governess, and her mother to live at Sawyer's Cottage, — vicissitudes which had been much spoken of in the village. The miller's daughter of fourteen could not believe that high gentry behaved badly to their wives, but her mother instructed her, — "Oh, child, men 's men: gentle or simple, they 're much of a muchness. I 've heard my mother say Squire Pelton used to take his dogs and a long whip into his wife's room, and flog 'em there to frighten her; and my mother was lady's-maid there at the very time."

"That 's unlucky talk for a wedding, Mrs. Girdle," said the tailor. "A quarrel may end wi' the whip, but it begins wi' the tongue, and it 's the women have got the most o' that."

"The Lord gave it 'em to use, I suppose," said Mrs. Girdle; "*He* never meant you to have it all your own way."

"By what I can make out from the gentleman as attends to the grooming at Offendene," said the tailor, "this Mr. Grandcourt has wonderful little tongue. Everything must be done dummy-like without his ordering."

"Then he 's the more whip, I doubt," said Mrs. Girdle. "*She* 's got tongue enough, I warrant her. See, there they come out together!"

"What wonderful long corners she 's got to her eyes!" said the tailor. "She makes you feel comical when she looks at you."

Gwendolen, in fact, never showed more elasticity in her bearing, more lustre in her long

brown glance: she had the brilliancy of strong excitement, which will sometimes come even from pain. It was not pain, however, that she was feeling: she had wrought herself up to much the same condition as that in which she stood at the gambling-table when Deronda was looking at her, and she began to lose. There was enjoyment in it: whatever uneasiness a growing conscience had created, was disregarded as an ailment might have been, amidst the gratification of that ambitious vanity and desire for luxury within her which it would take a great deal of slow poisoning to kill. This morning she could not have said truly that she repented her acceptance of Grandcourt, or that any fears in hazy perspective could hinder the glowing effects of the immediate scene in which she was the central object. That she was doing something wrong — that a punishment might be hanging over her — that the woman to whom she had given a promise and broken it, was thinking of her in bitterness and misery with a just reproach — that Deronda with his way of looking into things very likely despised her for marrying Grandcourt, as he had despised her for gambling — above all, that the cord which united her with this lover and which she had hitherto held by the hand, was now being flung over her neck, — all this yeasty mingling of dimly understood facts with vague but deep impressions, and with images half real, half fantastic, had been disturbing her during the weeks of her engagement. Was that agitating experience nullified this morning? No: it was surmounted and thrust down with a sort of exulting defiance as she felt herself standing at

the game of life with many eyes upon her, daring everything to win much — or if to lose, still with *éclat* and a sense of importance. But this morning a losing destiny for herself did not press upon her as a fear: she thought that she was entering on a fuller power of managing circumstance, — with all the official strength of marriage, which some women made so poor a use of. That intoxication of youthful egoism out of which she had been shaken by trouble, humiliation, and a new sense of culpability, had returned upon her under the newly fed strength of the old fumes. She did not in the least present the ideal of the tearful, tremulous bride. Poor Gwendolen, whom some had judged much too forward and instructed in the world's ways! — with her erect head and elastic footstep she was walking amid illusions; and yet, too, there was an under-consciousness in her that she was a little intoxicated.

"Thank God you bear it so well, my darling!" said Mrs. Davilow, when she had helped Gwendolen to doff her bridal white and put on her travelling dress. All the trembling had been done by the poor mother, and her agitation urged Gwendolen doubly to take the morning as if it were a triumph.

"Why, you might have said that, if I had been going to Mrs. Mompert's, you dear, sad, incorrigible mamma!" said Gwendolen, just putting her hands to her mother's cheeks with laughing tenderness, then retreating a little and spreading out her arms as if to exhibit herself. "Here am I, — Mrs. Grandcourt! what else would you have me but what I am sure to be?

You know you were ready to die with vexation when you thought that I would not be Mrs. Grandcourt."

"Hush, hush, my child, for heaven's sake!" said Mrs. Davilow, almost in a whisper. "How can I help feeling it when I am parting from you! But I can bear anything gladly if you are happy."

"Not gladly, mamma, no!" said Gwendolen, shaking her head with a bright smile. "Willingly would you bear it, but always sorrowfully. Sorrowing is your sauce; you can take nothing without it." Then, clasping her mother's shoulders and raining kisses first on one cheek and then on the other between her words, she said gayly, "And you shall sorrow over my having everything at my beck — and enjoying everything gloriously — splendid houses — and horses — and diamonds, I shall have diamonds — and going to court — and being Lady Certainly — and Lady Perhaps — and grand here — and tantivy there — and always loving you better than anybody else in the world."

"My sweet child! — But I shall not be jealous if you love your husband better; and he will expect to be first."

Gwendolen thrust out her lips and chin with a pretty grimace, saying, "Rather a ridiculous expectation. However, I don't mean to treat him ill, unless he deserves it."

Then the two fell into a clinging embrace, and Gwendolen could not hinder a rising sob when she said, "I wish you were going with me, mamma."

But the slight dew on her long eyelashes

only made her the more charming when she gave her hand to Grandcourt to be led to the carriage.

The Rector looked in on her to give a final "Good-by; God bless you; we shall see you again before long," and then returned to Mrs. Davilow saying half cheerfully, half solemnly,—

"Let us be thankful, Fanny. She is in a position well suited to her, and beyond what I should have dared to hope for. And few women can have been chosen more entirely for their own sake. You should feel yourself a happy mother."

There was a railway journey of some fifty miles before the new husband and wife reached the station near Ryelands. The sky had veiled itself since the morning, and it was hardly more than twilight when they entered the park-gates, but still Gwendolen, looking out of the carriage-window as they drove rapidly along, could see the grand outlines and the nearer beauties of the scene, — the long winding drive bordered with evergreens backed by huge gray stems; then the opening of wide grassy spaces and undulations studded with dark clumps; till at last came a wide level where the white house could be seen, with a hanging wood for a background and the rising and sinking balustrade of a terrace in front.

Gwendolen had been at her liveliest during the journey, chatting incessantly, ignoring any change in their mutual position since yesterday; and Grandcourt had been rather ecstatically quiescent, while she turned his gentle seizure of her hand into a grasp of his hand by both hers,

with an increased vivacity as of a kitten that will not sit quiet to be petted. She was really getting somewhat febrile in her excitement; and now in this drive through the park her usual susceptibility to changes of light and scenery helped to make her heart palpitate newly. Was it at the novelty simply, or the almost incredible fulfilment about to be given to her girlish dreams of being "somebody," — walking through her own furlong of corridors and under her own ceilings of an out-of-sight loftiness, where her own painted Spring was shedding painted flowers, and her own foreshortened Zephyrs were blowing their trumpets over her; while her own servants, lackeys in clothing but men in bulk and shape, were as naught in her presence, and revered the propriety of her insolence to them, — being, in short, the heroine of an admired play without the pains of art? Was it alone the closeness of this fulfilment which made her heart flutter? or was it some dim forecast, the insistent penetration of suppressed experience, mixing the expectation of a triumph with the dread of a crisis? Hers was one of the natures in which exultation inevitably carries an infusion of dread ready to curdle and declare itself.

She fell silent in spite of herself as they approached the gates, and when her husband said, "Here we are at home!" and for the first time kissed her on the lips, she hardly knew of it: it was no more than the passive acceptance of a greeting in the midst of an absorbing show. Was not all her hurrying life of the last three months a show, in which her consciousness was a wondering spectator? After the half-wilful ex-

citement of the day, a numbness had come over her personality.

But there was a brilliant light in the hall, — warmth, matting, carpets, full-length portraits, Olympian statues, assiduous servants. Not many servants, however: only a few from Diplow in addition to those constantly in charge of the house; and Gwendolen's new maid, who had come with her, was taken under guidance by the housekeeper. Gwendolen felt herself being led by Grandcourt along a subtly scented corridor, then into an anteroom where she saw an open doorway sending out a rich glow of light and colour.

"These are our dens," said Grandcourt. "You will like to be quiet here till dinner. We shall dine early."

He pressed her hand to his lips and moved away, more in love than he had ever expected to be.

Gwendolen, yielding up her hat and mantle, threw herself into a chair by the glowing hearth, and saw herself repeated in glass panels with all her faint-green satin surroundings. The housekeeper had passed into this boudoir from the adjoining dressing-room, and seemed disposed to linger, Gwendolen thought, in order to look at the new mistress of Ryelands, who however, being impatient for solitude, said to her, "Will you tell Hudson when she has put out my dress to leave everything? I shall not want her again, unless I ring."

The housekeeper, coming forward, said, "Here is a packet, madam, which I was ordered to give into nobody's hands but yours, when you

were alone. The person who brought it said it was a present particularly ordered by Mr. Grandcourt; but he was not to know of its arrival till he saw you wear it. Excuse me, madam; I felt it right to obey orders."

Gwendolen took the packet and let it lie on her lap till she heard the doors close. It came into her mind that the packet might contain the diamonds which Grandcourt had spoken of as being deposited somewhere and to be given to her on her marriage. In this moment of confused feeling and creeping luxurious languor she was glad of this diversion, — glad of such an event as having her own diamonds to try on.

Within all the sealed paper coverings was a box, but within the box there *was* a jewel-case; and now she felt no doubt that she had the diamonds. But on opening the case, in the same instant that she saw their gleam she saw a letter lying above them. She knew the handwriting of the address. It was as if an adder had lain on them. Her heart gave a leap which seemed to have spent all her strength; and as she opened the bit of thin paper, it shook with the trembling of her hands. But it was legible as print, and thrust its words upon her.

"These diamonds, which were once given with ardent love to Lydia Glasher, she passes on to you. You have broken your word to her, that you might possess what was hers. Perhaps you think of being happy, as she once was, and of having beautiful children such as hers, who will thrust hers aside. God is too just for that. The man you have married has a withered heart. His best young love was mine; you could not take that from me when you took the rest. It is dead; but I am

the grave in which your chance of happiness is buried as well as mine. You had your warning. You have chosen to injure me and my children. He had meant to marry me. He would have married me at last, if you had not broken your word. You will have your punishment. I desire it with all my soul.

"Will you give him this letter to set him against me and ruin us more,—me and my children? Shall you like to stand before your husband with these diamonds on you, and these words of mine in his thoughts and yours? Will he think you have any right to complain when he has made you miserable? You took him with your eyes open. The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse."

It seemed at first as if Gwendolen's eyes were spell-bound in reading the horrible words of the letter over and over again as a doom of penance; but suddenly a new spasm of terror made her lean forward and stretch out the paper towards the fire, lest accusation and proof at once should meet all eyes. It flew like a feather from her trembling fingers, and was caught up in the great draught of flame. In her movement the casket fell on the floor, and the diamonds rolled out. She took no notice, but fell back in her chair again helpless. She could not see the reflections of herself then: they were like so many women petrified white; but coming near herself, you might have seen the tremor in her lips and hands. She sat so for a long while, knowing little more than that she was feeling ill, and that those written words kept repeating themselves in her.

Truly here were poisoned gems, and the poison had entered into this poor young creature.

After that long while there was a tap at the door, and Grandcourt entered, dressed for dinner. The sight of him brought a new nervous shock, and Gwendolen screamed again and again with hysterical violence. He had expected to see her dressed and smiling, ready to be led down. He saw her pallid, shrieking as it seemed with terror, the jewels scattered around her on the floor. Was it a fit of madness?

In some form or other the Furies had crossed his threshold.

CHAPTER V

"In all ages it hath been a favourite text that a potent love hath the nature of an isolated fatality, whereto the mind's opinions and wonted resolves are altogether alien, as, for example, Daphnis his frenzy, wherein it had little availed him to have been convinced of Heraclitus his doctrine; or the philtre-bred passion of Tristan, who, though he had been as deep as Duns Scotus, would have had his reasoning marred by that cup too much; or Romeo in his sudden taking for Juliet, wherein any objections he might have held against Ptolemy had made little difference to his discourse under the balcony. Yet all love is not such, even though potent; nay, this passion hath as large scope as any for allying itself with every operation of the soul: so that it shall acknowledge an effect from the imagined light of unproven firmaments, and have its scale set to the grander orbits of what hath been and shall be."

DERONDA, on his return to town, could assure Sir Hugo of his having lodged in Grandcourt's mind a distinct understanding that he could get fifty thousand pounds by giving up a prospect which was probably distant, and not absolutely certain; but he had no further sign of Grandcourt's disposition in the matter than that he was evidently inclined to keep up friendly communications.

"And what did you think of the future bride on a nearer survey?" said Sir Hugo.

"I thought better of her than I did at Leubronn. Roulette was not a good setting for her; it brought out something of the demon. At Diplow she seemed much more womanly and attractive, — less hard and self-possessed. I thought her mouth and eyes had quite a different expression."

"Don't flirt with her too much, Dan," said Sir Hugo, meaning to be agreeably playful. "If

you make Grandcourt savage when they come to the Abbey at Christmas, it will interfere with my affairs."

"I can stay in town, sir."

"No, no. Lady Mallinger and the children can't do without you at Christmas. Only don't make mischief, — unless you can get up a duel, and manage to shoot Grandcourt, which might be worth a little inconvenience."

"I don't think you ever saw me flirt," said Deronda, not amused.

"Oh, haven't I, though?" said Sir Hugo, provokingly. "You are always looking tenderly at the women, and talking to them in a Jesuitical way. You are a dangerous young fellow, — a kind of Lovelace who will make the Clarissas run after you instead of your running after them."

What was the use of being exasperated at a tasteless joke? — only the exasperation comes before the reflection on utility. Few friendly remarks are more annoying than the information that we are always seeming to do what we never mean to do. Sir Hugo's notion of flirting, it was to be hoped, was rather peculiar; for his own part, Deronda was sure that he had never flirted. But he was glad that the baronet had no knowledge about the repurchase of Gwendolen's necklace to feed his taste for this kind of rallying.

He would be on his guard in future; for example, in his behaviour at Mrs. Meyrick's, where he was about to pay his first visit since his arrival from Leubronn. For Mirah was certainly a creature in whom it was difficult not to show a tender kind of interest both by looks and speech.

Mrs. Meyrick had not failed to send Deronda a report of Mirah's well-being in her family. "We are getting fonder of her every day," she had written. "At breakfast-time we all look towards the door with expectation to see her come in; and we watch her and listen to her as if she were a native from a new country. I have not heard a word from her lips that gives me a doubt about her. She is quite contented and full of gratitude. My daughters are learning from her, and they hope to get her other pupils; for she is anxious not to eat the bread of idleness, but to work, like my girls. Mab says our life has become like a fairy tale, and all she is afraid of is that Mirah will turn into a nightingale again and fly away from us. Her voice is just perfect: not loud and strong, but searching and melting, like the thoughts of what has been. That is the way old people like me feel a beautiful voice."

But Mrs. Meyrick did not enter into particulars which would have required her to say that Amy and Mab, who had accompanied Mirah to the synagogue, found the Jewish faith less reconcilable with their wishes in her case than in that of Scott's Rebecca. They kept silence out of delicacy to Mirah, with whom her religion was too tender a subject to be touched lightly; but after a while Amy, who was much of a practical reformer, could not restrain a question.

"Excuse me, Mirah, but *does* it seem quite right to you that the women should sit behind rails in a gallery apart?"

"Yes, I never thought of anything else," said Mirah, with mild surprise.

"And you like better to see the men with their hats on?" said Mab, cautiously proposing the smallest item of difference.

"Oh, yes. I like what I have always seen there, because it brings back to me the same feelings, — the feelings I would not part with for anything else in the world."

After this, any criticism, whether of doctrine or of practice, would have seemed to these generous little people an inhospitable cruelty. Mirah's religion was of one fibre with her affections, and had never presented itself to her as a set of propositions.

"She says herself she is a very bad Jewess, and does not half know her people's religion," said Amy, when Mirah was gone to bed. "Perhaps it would gradually melt away from her, and she would pass into Christianity like the rest of the world, if she got to love us very much, and never found her mother. It is so strange to be of the Jews' religion now."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Mab. "I wish I were not such a hideous Christian. How can an ugly Christian who is always dropping her work convert a beautiful Jewess who has not a fault?"

"It may be wicked of me," said shrewd Kate, "but I cannot help wishing that her mother may not be found. There might be something unpleasant."

"I don't think it, my dear," said Mrs. Meyrick. "I believe Mirah is cut out after the pattern of her mother. And what a joy it would be to her to have such a daughter brought back again! But a mother's feelings are not worth

reckoning, I suppose" (she shot a mischievous glance at her own daughters), "and a dead mother is worth more than a living one?"

"Well, and so she may be, little mother," said Kate; "but we would rather hold you cheaper, and have you alive."

Not only the Meyricks, whose various knowledge had been acquired by the irregular foraging to which clever girls have usually been reduced, but Deronda himself, with all his masculine instruction, had been roused by this apparition of Mirah to the consciousness of knowing hardly anything about modern Judaism or the inner Jewish history. The Chosen People have been commonly treated as a people chosen for the sake of somebody else; and their thinking as something (no matter exactly what) that ought to have been entirely otherwise; and Deronda, like his neighbours, had regarded Judaism as a sort of eccentric fossilized form which an accomplished man might dispense with studying, and leave to specialists. But Mirah, with her terrified flight from one parent, and her yearning after the other, had flashed on him the hitherto neglected reality that Judaism was something still throbbing in human lives, still making for them the only conceivable vesture of the world; and in the idling excursion on which he immediately afterwards set out with Sir Hugo he began to look for the outsides of synagogues, and the titles of books about the Jews. This wakening of a new interest — this passing from the supposition that we hold the right opinions on a subject we are careless about, to a sudden care for it, and a sense that our opinions were igno-

rance — is an effectual remedy for *ennui,* which unhappily cannot be secured on a physician's prescription; but Deronda had carried it with him, and endured his weeks of lounging all the better. It was on this journey that he first entered a Jewish synagogue — at Frankfort — where his party rested on a Friday. In exploring the Juden-gasse, which he had seen long before, he remembered well enough its picturesque old houses; what his eyes chiefly dwelt on now were the human types there; and his thought, busily connecting them with the past phases of their race, stirred that fibre of historic sympathy which had helped to determine in him certain traits worth mentioning for those who are interested in his future. True, when a young man has a fine person, no eccentricity of manners, the education of a gentleman, and a present income, it is not customary to feel a prying curiosity about his way of thinking or his peculiar tastes. He may very well be settled in life as an agreeable clever young fellow without passing a special examination on those heads. Later, when he is getting rather slovenly and portly, his peculiarities are more distinctly discerned, and it is taken as a mercy if they are not highly objectionable. But any one wishing to understand the effect of after events on Deronda should know a little more of what he was at five-and-twenty than was evident in ordinary intercourse.

It happened that the very vividness of his impressions had often made him the more enigmatic to his friends, and had contributed to an apparent indefiniteness in his sentiments. His

early-wakened sensibility and reflectiveness had developed into a many-sided sympathy, which threatened to hinder any persistent course of action: as soon as he took up any antagonism, though only in thought, he seemed to himself like the Sabine warriors in the memorable story, — with nothing to meet his spear but flesh of his flesh, and objects that he loved. His imagination had so wrought itself to the habit of seeing things as they probably appeared to others, that a strong partisanship, unless it were against an immediate oppression, had become an insincerity for him. His plenteous, flexible sympathy had ended by falling into one current with that reflective analysis which tends to neutralize sympathy. Few men were able to keep themselves clearer of vices than he; yet he hated vices mildly, being used to think of them less in the abstract than as a part of mixed human natures having an individual history, which it was the bent of his mind to trace with understanding and pity. With the same innate balance he was fervidly democratic in his feeling for the multitude, and yet, through his affections and imagination, intensely conservative; voracious of speculations on government and religion, yet loath to part with long-sanctioned forms which, for him, were quick with memories and sentiments that no argument could lay dead. We fall on the leaning side; and Deronda suspected himself of loving too well the losing causes of the world. Martyrdom changes sides, and he was in danger of changing with it, having a strong repugnance to taking up that clew of success which the order of the world often forces upon us and

makes it treason against the common weal to reject. And yet his fear of falling into an unreasoning narrow hatred made a check for him: he apologized for the heirs of privilege; he shrank with dislike from the loser's bitterness and the denunciatory tone of the unaccepted innovator. A too reflective and diffusive sympathy was in danger of paralyzing in him that indignation against wrong and that selectness of fellowship which are the conditions of moral force; and in the last few years of confirmed manhood he had become so keenly aware of this that what he most longed for was either some external event, or some inward light, that would urge him into a definite line of action, and compress his wandering energy. He was ceasing to care for knowledge, — he had no ambition for practice, — unless they could both be gathered up into one current with his emotions; and he dreaded, as if it were a dwelling-place of lost souls, that dead anatomy of culture which turns the universe into a mere ceaseless answer to queries, and knows, not everything, but everything else about everything, — as if one should be ignorant of nothing concerning the scent of violets except the scent itself for which one had no nostril. But how and whence was the needed event to come? — the influence that would justify partiality, and make him what he longed to be yet was unable to make himself, — an organic part of social life, instead of roaming in it like a yearning disembodied spirit, stirred with a vague social passion, but without fixed local habitation to render fellowship real? To make a little difference for the better was what he was

not contented to live without; but how make it? It is one thing to see your road, another to cut it. He found some of the fault in his birth and the way he had been brought up, which had laid no special demands on him and given him no fixed relationship except one of a doubtful kind; but he did not attempt to hide from himself that he had fallen into a meditative numbness, and was gliding farther and farther from that life of practically energetic sentiment which he would have proclaimed (if he had been inclined to proclaim anything) to be the best of all life, and for himself the only life worth living. He wanted some way of keeping emotion and its progeny of sentiments, — which make the savours of life, — substantial and strong in the face of a reflectiveness that threatened to nullify all differences. To pound the objects of sentiment into small dust, yet keep sentiment alive and active, was something like the famous recipe for making cannon, — to first take a round hole and then enclose it with iron; whatever you do, keeping fast hold of your round hole. Yet how distinguish what our will may wisely save in its completeness, from the heaping of cat-mummies and the expensive cult of enshrined putrefactions?

Something like this was the common undercurrent in Deronda's mind, while he was reading law, or imperfectly attending to polite conversation. Meanwhile he had not set about one function in particular with zeal and steadiness. Not an admirable experience, to be proposed as an ideal; but a form of struggle before break of day which some young men since the

patriarch have had to pass through, with more or less of bruising if not laming.

I have said that under his calm exterior he had a fervour which made him easily feel the presence of poetry in every-day events; and the forms of the Juden-gasse, rousing the sense of union with what is remote, set him musing on two elements of our historic life which that sense raises into the same region of poetry, — the faint beginnings of faiths and institutions, and their obscure lingering decay; the dust and withered remnants with which they are apt to be covered, only enhancing for the awakened perception the impressiveness either of a sublimely penetrating life, as in the twin green leaves that will become the sheltering tree, or of a pathetic inheritance in which all the grandeur and the glory have become a sorrowing memory.

This imaginative stirring, as he turned out of the Juden-gasse, and continued to saunter in the warm evening air, meaning to find his way to the synagogue, neutralized the repellent effect of certain ugly little incidents on his way. Turning into an old book-shop to ask the exact time of service at the synagogue, he was affectionately directed by a precocious Jewish youth, who entered cordially into his wanting not the fine new building of the reformed but the old Rabbinical school of the orthodox; and then cheated him like a pure Teuton, only with more amenity, in his charge for a book quite out of request as one "nicht so leicht zu bekommen." Meanwhile at the opposite counter a deaf and grisly tradesman was casting a flinty look at

certain cards, apparently combining advantages of business with religion, and shoutingly proposed to him in Jew-dialect by a dingy man in a tall coat hanging from neck to heel, a bag in hand, and a broad low hat surmounting his chosen nose, — who had no sooner disappeared than another dingy man of the same pattern issued from the backward glooms of the shop and also shouted in the same dialect. In fact, Deronda saw various queer-looking Israelites not altogether without guile, and just distinguishable from queer-looking Christians of the same mixed *morale*. In his anxiety about Mirah's relatives, he had lately been thinking of vulgar Jews with a sort of personal alarm. But a little comparison will often diminish our surprise and disgust at the aberrations of Jews and other dissidents whose lives do not offer a consistent or lovely pattern of their creed; and this evening Deronda, becoming more conscious that he was falling into unfairness and ridiculous exaggeration, began to use that corrective comparison: he paid his thaler too much, without prejudice to his interests in the Hebrew destiny, or his wish to find the *Rabbinische Schule*, which he arrived at by sunset, and entered with a good congregation of men.

He happened to take his seat in a line with an elderly man from whom he was distant enough to glance at him more than once as rather a noticeable figure, — his ample white beard and felt hat framing a profile of that fine contour which may as easily be Italian as Hebrew. He returned Deronda's notice till at last their eyes met, — an undesirable chance

with unknown persons, and a reason to Deronda for not looking again; but he immediately found an open prayer-book pushed towards him and had to bow his thanks. However, the congregation had mustered, the reader had mounted to the *almemor*, or platform, and the service began. Deronda, having looked enough at the German translation of the Hebrew in the book before him to know that he was chiefly hearing Psalms and Old Testament passages or phrases, gave himself up to that strongest effect of chanted liturgies which is independent of detailed verbal meaning, — like the effect of an Allegri's *Miserere* or a Palestrina's *Magnificat*. The most powerful movement of feeling with a liturgy is the prayer which seeks for nothing special, but is a yearning to escape from the limitations of our own weakness and an invocation of all Good to enter and abide with us; or else a self-oblivious lifting up of gladness, a *Gloria in excelsis* that such Good exists; both the yearning and the exultation gathering their utmost force from the sense of communion in a form which has expressed them both, for long generations of struggling fellow-men. The Hebrew liturgy, like others, has its transitions of litany, lyric, proclamation, dry statement and blessing; but this evening all were one for Deronda: the chant of the *Chazan's* or Reader's grand wide-ranging voice with its passage from monotony to sudden cries, the outburst of sweet boys' voices from the little choir, the devotional swaying of men's bodies backwards and forwards, the very commonness of the building and shabbiness of the scene where a national faith,

which had penetrated the thinking of half the world, and moulded the splendid forms of that world's religion, was finding a remote, obscure echo, — all were blent for him as one expression of a binding history, tragic and yet glorious. He wondered at the strength of his own feeling; it seemed beyond the occasion,—what one might imagine to be a divine influx in the darkness, before there was any vision to interpret. The whole scene was a coherent strain, its burthen a passionate regret, which, if he had known the liturgy for the Day of Reconciliation, he might have clad in its antithetic burthen: "Happy the eye which saw all these things; but verily to hear only of them afflicts our soul. Happy the eye that saw our temple and the joy of our congregation; but verily to hear only of them afflicts our soul. Happy the eye that saw the fingers when tuning every kind of song; but verily to hear only of them afflicts our soul."

But with the cessation of the devotional sounds and the movement of many indifferent faces and vulgar figures before him, there darted into his mind the frigid idea that he had probably been alone in his feeling, and perhaps the only person in the congregation for whom the service was more than a dull routine. There was just time for this chilling thought before he had bowed to his civil neighbour and was moving away with the rest, — when he felt a hand on his arm, and turning with the rather unpleasant sensation which this abrupt sort of claim is apt to bring, he saw close to him the white-bearded face of that neighbour, who said to him in German, "Excuse me, young gentleman — allow

me — what is your parentage — your mother's family — her maiden name?"

Deronda had a strongly resistant feeling: he was inclined to shake off hastily the touch on his arm; but he managed to slip it away and said coldly, "I am an Englishman."

The questioner looked at him dubiously still for an instant, then just lifted his hat and turned away, — whether under a sense of having made a mistake or of having been repulsed, Deronda was uncertain. In his walk back to the hotel he tried to still any uneasiness on the subject by reflecting that he could not have acted differently. How could he say that he did not know the name of his mother's family to that total stranger? — who indeed had taken an unwarrantable liberty in the abruptness of his question, dictated probably by some fancy of likeness such as often occurs without real significance. The incident, he said to himself, was trivial; but whatever import it might have, his inward shrinking on the occasion was too strong for him to be sorry that he had cut it short. It was a reason, however, for his not mentioning the synagogue to the Mallingers, — in addition to his usual inclination to reticence on anything that the baronet would have been likely to call Quixotic enthusiasm. Hardly any man could be more good-natured than Sir Hugo; indeed in his kindliness, especially to women, he did actions which others would have called romantic; but he never took a romantic view of them, and in general smiled at the introduction of motives on a grand scale, or of reasons that lay very far off. This was the point of strong-

est difference between him and Deronda, who rarely ate his breakfast without some silent discursive flight after grounds for filling up his day according to the practice of his contemporaries.

This halt at Frankfort was taken on their way home, and its impressions were kept the more actively vibrating in him by the duty of caring for Mirah's welfare. That question about his parentage, which if he had not both inwardly and outwardly shaken it off as trivial, would have seemed a threat rather than a promise of revelation, had reinforced his anxiety as to the effect of finding Mirah's relatives and his resolve to proceed with caution. If he made any unpleasant discovery, was he bound to a disclosure that might cast a new net of trouble around her?

He had written to Mrs. Meyrick to announce his visit at four o'clock, and he found Mirah seated at work with only Mrs. Meyrick and Mab, the open piano, and all the glorious company of engravings. The dainty neatness of her hair and dress, the glow of tranquil happiness in a face where a painter need have changed nothing if he had wanted to put it in front of the host singing "peace on earth and good-will to men," made a contrast to his first vision of her that was delightful to Deronda's eyes. Mirah herself was thinking of it, and immediately on their greeting said, —

"See how different I am from that miserable creature by the river! — all because you found me and brought me to the very best."

"It was my good chance to find you," said

Deronda. "Any other man would have been glad to do what I did."

"That is not the right way of thinking about it," said Mirah, shaking her head with decisive gravity. "I think of what really was. It was you, and not another, who found me, and were good to me."

"I agree with Mirah," said Mrs. Meyrick. "Saint Anybody is a bad saint to pray to."

"Besides, Anybody could not have brought me to you," said Mirah, smiling at Mrs. Meyrick. "And I would rather be with you than with any one else in the world except my mother. I wonder if ever a poor little bird, that was lost and could not fly, was taken and put into a warm nest where there was a mother and sisters who took to it so that everything came naturally, as if it had been always there. I hardly thought before that the world could ever be as happy and without fear as it is to me now." She looked meditative a moment, and then said, "Sometimes I am a *little* afraid."

"What is it you are afraid of?" said Deronda, with anxiety.

"That when I am turning at the corner of a street I may meet my father. It seems dreadful that I should be afraid of meeting him. That is my only sorrow," said Mirah, plaintively.

"It is surely not very probable," said Deronda, wishing that it were less so; then, not to let the opportunity escape, — "Would it be a great grief to you now, if you were never to meet your mother?"

She did not answer immediately, but medi-

tated again, with her eyes fixed on the opposite wall. Then she turned them on Deronda and said firmly, as if she had arrived at the exact truth, "I want her to know that I have always loved her, and if she is alive I want to comfort her. She may be dead. If she were, I should long to know where she was buried; and to know whether my brother lives, so that we can remember her together. But I will try not to grieve. I have thought much for so many years of her being dead. And I shall have her with me in my mind, as I have always had. We can never be really parted. I think I have never sinned against her. I have always tried not to do what would hurt her. Only she might be sorry that I was not a good Jewess."

"In what way are you not a good Jewess?" said Deronda.

"I am ignorant, and we never observed the laws, but lived among Christians just as they did. But I have heard my father laugh at the strictness of the Jews about their food and all customs, and their not liking Christians. I think my mother was strict; but she could never want me not to like those who are better to me than any of my own people I have ever known. I think I could obey in other things that she wished, but not in that. It is so much easier to me to share in love than in hatred. I remember a play I read in German — since I have been here, it has come into my mind, — where the heroine says something like that."

"Antigone," said Deronda.

"Ah, you know it. But I do not believe that my mother would wish me not to love my best

friends. She would be grateful to them." Here Mirah had turned to Mrs. Meyrick, and with a sudden lighting up of her whole countenance she said, "Oh, if we ever do meet and know each other as we are now, so that I could tell what would comfort her, — I should be so full of blessedness, my soul would know no want but to love her!"

"God bless you, child!" said Mrs. Meyrick, the words escaping involuntarily from her motherly heart. But to relieve the strain of feeling she looked at Deronda and said, "It is curious that Mirah, who remembers her mother so well it is as if she saw her, cannot recall her brother the least bit, — except the feeling of having been carried by him when she was tired, and of his being near her when she was in her mother's lap. It must be that he was rarely at home. He was already grown up. It is a pity her brother should be quite a stranger to her."

"He is good; I feel sure Ezra is good," said Mirah, eagerly. "He loved my mother, — he would take care of her. I remember more of him than that. I remember my mother's voice once calling, 'Ezra!' and then his answering from the distance, 'Mother!'" — Mirah had changed her voice a little in each of these words, and had given them a loving intonation, — "and then he came close to us. I feel sure he is good. I have always taken comfort from that."

It was impossible to answer this either with agreement or doubt. Mrs. Meyrick and Deronda exchanged a quick glance: about this brother she felt as painfully dubious as he did. But Mirah went on, absorbed in her memories, —

"Is it not wonderful how I remember the voices better than anything else? I think they must go deeper into us than other things. I have often fancied heaven might be made of voices."

"Like your singing — yes," said Mab, who had hitherto kept a modest silence, and now spoke bashfully, as was her wont in the presence of Prince Camaralzaman, — "Ma, do ask Mirah to sing. Mr. Deronda has not heard her."

"Would it be disagreeable to you to sing now?" said Deronda, with a more deferential gentleness than he had ever been conscious of before.

"Oh, I shall like it," said Mirah. "My voice has come back a little with rest."

Perhaps her ease of manner was due to something more than the simplicity of her nature. The circumstances of her life had made her think of everything she did as work demanded from her, in which affectation had nothing to do; and she had begun her work before self-consciousness was born.

She immediately rose and went to the piano, — a somewhat worn instrument that seemed to get the better of its infirmities under the firm touch of her small fingers as she preluded. Deronda placed himself where he could see her while she sang; and she took everything as quietly as if she had been a child going to breakfast.

Imagine her — it is always good to imagine a human creature in whom bodily loveliness seems as properly one with the entire being as the bodily loveliness of those wondrous trans-

parent orbs of life that we find in the sea — imagine her with her dark hair brushed from her temples, but yet showing certain tiny rings there which had cunningly found their own way back, the mass of it hanging behind just to the nape of the little neck in curly fibres, such as renew themselves at their own will after being bathed into straightness like that of water-grasses. Then see the perfect cameo her profile makes, cut in a duskish shell where by some happy fortune there pierced a gem-like darkness for the eye and eyebrow; the delicate nostrils defined enough to be ready for sensitive movements, the finished ear, the firm curves of the chin and neck entering into the expression of a refinement which was not feebleness.

She sang Beethoven's "Per pietà non dirmi addio," with a subdued but searching pathos which had that essential of perfect singing, the making one oblivious of art or manner, and only possessing one with the song. It was the sort of voice that gives the impression of being meant like a bird's wooing for an audience near and beloved. Deronda began by looking at her, but felt himself presently covering his eyes with his hand, wanting to seclude the melody in darkness; then he refrained from what might seem oddity, and was ready to meet the look of mute appeal which she turned towards him at the end.

"I think I never enjoyed a song more than that," he said gratefully.

"You like my singing? I am so glad," she said, with a smile of delight. "It has been a great pain to me, because it failed in what it was

wanted for. But now we think I can use it to get my bread. I have really been taught well. And now I have two pupils, that Miss Meyrick found for me. They pay me nearly two crowns for their two lessons."

"I think I know some ladies who would find you many pupils after Christmas," said Deronda. "You would not mind singing before any one who wished to hear you?"

"Oh, no, I want to do something to get money. I could teach reading and speaking, Mrs. Meyrick thinks. But if no one would learn of me, that is difficult." Mirah smiled with a touch of merriment he had not seen in her before. "I dare say I should find her poor, — I mean my mother. I should want to get money for her. And I cannot always live on charity; though" — here she turned so as to take all three of her companions in one glance — "it is the sweetest charity in all the world."

"I should think you can get rich," said Deronda, smiling. "Great ladies will perhaps like you to teach their daughters. We shall see. But now do sing again to us."

She went on willingly, singing with ready memory various things by Gordigiani and Schubert; then, when she had left the piano, Mab said entreatingly, "Oh, Mirah, if you would not mind singing the little hymn."

"It is too childish," said Mirah. "It is like lisping."

"What is the hymn?" said Deronda.

"It is the Hebrew hymn she remembers her mother singing over her when she lay in her cot," said Mrs. Meyrick.

"I should like very much to hear it," said Deronda, "if you think I am worthy to hear what is so sacred."

"I will sing it if you like," said Mirah, "but I don't sing real words — only here and there a syllable like hers — the rest is lisping. Do you know Hebrew? because if you do, my singing will seem childish nonsense."

Deronda shook his head. "It will be quite good Hebrew to me."

Mirah crossed her little feet and hands in her easiest attitude, and then lifted up her head at an angle which seemed to be directed to some invisible face bent over her, while she sang a little hymn of quaint melancholy intervals, with syllables that really seemed childish lisping to her audience; but the voice in which she gave it forth had gathered even a sweeter, more cooing tenderness than was heard in her other songs.

"If I were ever to know the real words, I should still go on in my old way with them," said Mirah, when she had repeated the hymn several times.

"Why not?" said Deronda. "The lisped syllables are very full of meaning."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Meyrick. "A mother hears something like a lisp in her children's talk to the very last. Their words are not just what everybody else says, though they may be spelt the same. If I were to live till my Hans got old, I should still see the boy in him. A mother's love, I often say, is like a tree that has got all the wood in it, from the very first it made."

"Is not that the way with friendship too?" said Deronda, smiling. "We must not let mothers be too arrogant."

The bright little woman shook her head over her darning.

"It is easier to find an old mother than an old friend. Friendships begin with liking or gratitude, — roots that can be pulled up. Mother's love begins deeper down."

"Like what you were saying about the influence of voices," said Deronda, looking at Mirah. "I don't think your hymn would have had more expression for me if I had known the words. I went to the synagogue at Frankfort before I came home, and the service impressed me just as much as if I had followed the words, — perhaps more."

"Oh, was it great to you? Did it go to your heart?" said Mirah, eagerly. "I thought none but our people would feel that. I thought it was all shut away like a river in a deep valley, where only heaven saw — I mean — " she hesitated, feeling that she could not disentangle her thought from its imagery.

"I understand," said Deronda. "But there is not really such a separation, — deeper down, as Mrs. Meyrick says. Our religion is chiefly a Hebrew religion; and since Jews are men, their religious feelings must have much in common with those of other men, — just as their poetry, though in one sense peculiar, has a great deal in common with the poetry of other nations. Still it is to be expected that a Jew would feel the forms of his people's religion more than one of another race, — and yet " — here Deronda

hesitated in his turn — "that is perhaps not always so."

"Ah, no," said Mirah, sadly. "I have seen that. I have seen them mock. Is it not like mocking your parents? — like rejoicing in your parents' shame?"

"Some minds naturally rebel against whatever they were brought up in, and like the opposite; they see the faults in what is nearest to them," said Deronda, apologetically.

"But you are not like that," said Mirah, looking at him with unconscious fixedness.

"No, I think not," said Deronda; "but you know I was not brought up as a Jew."

"Ah, I am always forgetting," said Mirah, with a look of disappointed recollection, and slightly blushing.

Deronda also felt rather embarrassed, and there was an awkward pause, which he put an end to by saying playfully, —

"Whichever way we take it, we have to tolerate each other; for if we all went in opposition to our teaching, we must end in difference, just the same."

"To be sure. We should go on forever in zigzags," said Mrs. Meyrick. "I think it is very weak-minded to make your creed up by the rule of contrary. Still one may honour one's parents without following their notions exactly, any more than the exact cut of their clothing. My father was a Scotch Calvinist and my mother was a French Calvinist; I am neither quite Scotch, nor quite French, nor two Calvinists rolled into one, yet I honour my parents' memory."

"But I could not make myself not a Jewess," said Mirah, insistently, "even if I changed my belief."

"No, my dear. But if Jews and Jewesses went on changing their religion, and making no difference between themselves and Christians, there would come a time when there would be no Jews to be seen," said Mrs. Meyrick, taking that consummation very cheerfully.

"Oh, please not to say that," said Mirah, the tears gathering. "It is the first unkind thing you ever said. I will not begin that. I will never separate myself from my mother's people. I was forced to fly from my father; but if he came back in age and weakness and want, and needed me, should I say, 'This is not my father'? If he had shame, I must share it. It was he who was given to me for my father, and not another. And so it is with my people. I will always be a Jewess. I will love Christians when they are good, like you. But I will always cling to my people. I will always worship with them."

As Mirah had gone on speaking, she had become possessed with a sorrowful passion, — fervent, not violent. Holding her little hands tightly clasped and looking at Mrs. Meyrick with beseeching, she seemed to Deronda a personification of that spirit which impelled men after a long inheritance of professed Catholicism to leave wealth and high place, and risk their lives in flight, that they might join their own people and say, "I am a Jew."

"Mirah, Mirah, my dear child, you mistake me!" said Mrs. Meyrick, alarmed. "God for-

bid I should want you to do anything against your conscience. I was only saying what might be if the world went on. But I had better have left the world alone, and not wanted to be overwise. Forgive me, come! we will not try to take you from anybody you feel has more right to you."

"I would do anything else for you. I owe you my life," said Mirah, not yet quite calm.

"Hush, hush, now!" said Mrs. Meyrick. "I have been punished enough for wagging my tongue foolishly, — making an almanac for the Millennium, as my husband used to say."

"But everything in the world must come to an end sometime. We must bear to think of that," said Mab, unable to hold her peace on this point. She had already suffered from a bondage of tongue which threatened to become severe if Mirah were to be too much indulged in this inconvenient susceptibility to innocent remarks.

Deronda smiled at the irregular, blond face, brought into strange contrast by the side of Mirah's, — smiled, Mab thought, rather sarcastically as he said, "That prospect of everything coming to an end will not guide us far in practice. Mirah's feelings, she tells us, are concerned with what is."

Mab was confused and wished she had not spoken, since Mr. Deronda seemed to think that she had found fault with Mirah; but to have spoken once is a tyrannous reason for speaking again, and she said, —

"I only meant that we must have courage to hear things, else there is hardly anything we can talk about." Mab felt herself unanswerable here,

inclining to the opinion of Socrates: "What motive has a man to live, if not for the pleasures of discourse?"

Deronda took his leave soon after; and when Mrs. Meyrick went outside with him to exchange a few words about Mirah, he said, "Hans is to share my chambers when he comes at Christmas."

"You have written to Rome about that?" said Mrs. Meyrick, her face lighting up. "How very good and thoughtful of you! You mentioned Mirah, then?"

"Yes, I referred to her. I concluded he knew everything from you."

"I must confess my folly. I have not yet written a word about her. I have always been meaning to do it, and yet have ended my letter without saying a word. And I told the girls to leave it to me. However! — Thank you a thousand times."

Deronda divined something of what was in the mother's mind, and his divination reinforced a certain anxiety already present in him. His inward colloquy was not soothing. He said to himself that no man could see this exquisite creature without feeling it possible to fall in love with her; but all the fervour of his nature was engaged on the side of precaution. There are personages who feel themselves tragic because they march into a palpable morass, dragging another with them, and then cry out against all the gods. Deronda's mind was strongly set against imitating them.

"I have my hands on the reins now," he thought, "and I will not drop them. I shall go there as little as possible."

He saw the reasons acting themselves out before him. How could he be Mirah's guardian and claim to unite with Mrs. Meyrick, to whose charge he had committed her, if he showed himself as a lover, — whom she did not love, — whom she would not marry? And if he encouraged any germ of lover's feeling in himself, it would lead up to that issue. Mirah's was not a nature that would bear dividing against itself; and even if love won her consent to marry a man who was not of her race and religion, she would never be happy in acting against that strong native bias which would still reign in her conscience as remorse.

Deronda saw these consequences as we see any danger of marring our own work well begun. It was a delight to have rescued this child acquainted with sorrow, and to think of having placed her little feet in protected paths. The creature we help to save, though only a half-reared linnet, bruised and lost by the wayside, — how we watch and fence it, and dote on its signs of recovery! Our pride becomes loving, our self is a not-self for whose sake we become virtuous, when we set to some hidden work of reclaiming a life from misery and look for our triumph in the secret joy, — "This one is the better for me."

"I would as soon hold out my finger to be bitten off as set about spoiling her peace," said Deronda. "It was one of the rarest bits of fortune that I should have had friends like the Meyricks to place her with, — generous, delicate friends without any loftiness in their ways, so that her dependence on them is not only safety

but happiness. There could be no refuge to replace that, if it were broken up. But what is the use of my taking the vows and settling everything as it should be, if that marplot Hans comes and upsets it all?"

Few things were more likely. Hans was made for mishaps: his very limbs seemed more breakable than other people's, — his eyes more of a resort for uninvited flies and other irritating guests. But it was impossible to forbid Hans's coming to London. He was intending to get a studio there and make it his chief home; and to propose that he should defer coming on some ostensible ground, concealing the real motive of winning time for Mirah's position to become more confirmed and independent, was impracticable. Having no other resource, Deronda tried to believe that both he and Mrs. Meyrick were foolishly troubling themselves about one of those endless things called probabilities, which never occur; but he did not quite succeed in his trying: on the contrary, he found himself going inwardly through a scene where, on the first discovery of Hans's inclination, he gave him a very energetic warning, — suddenly checked, however, by the suspicion of personal feeling that his warmth might be creating in Hans. He could come to no result, but that the position was peculiar, and that he could make no further provision against dangers until they came nearer. To save an unhappy Jewess from drowning herself, would not have seemed a startling variation among police reports; but to discover in her so rare a creature as Mirah, was an exceptional event which might well bring exceptional conse-

quences. Deronda would not let himself for a moment dwell on any supposition that the consequences might enter deeply into his own life. The image of Mirah had never yet had that penetrating radiation which would have been given to it by the idea of her loving him. When this sort of effluence is absent from the fancy (whether from the fact or not), a man may go far in devotedness without perturbation.

As to the search for Mirah's mother and brother, Deronda took what she had said to-day as a warrant for deferring any immediate measures. His conscience was not quite easy in this desire for delay, any more than it was quite easy in his not attempting to learn the truth about his own mother: in both cases he felt that there might be an unfulfilled duty to a parent, but in both cases there was an overpowering repugnance to the possible truth, which threw a turning weight into the scale of argument.

"At least, I will look about," was his final determination. "I may find some special Jewish machinery. I will wait till after Christmas."

What should we all do without the calendar, when we want to put off a disagreeable duty? The admirable arrangements of the solar system, by which our time is measured, always supply us with a term before which it is hardly worth while to set about anything we are disinclined to.

CHAPTER VI

"'No man,' says a Rabbi, by way of indisputable instance, 'may turn the bones of his father and mother into spoons,' — sure that his hearers felt the checks against that form of economy. The market for spoons has never expanded enough for any one to say, 'Why not?' and to argue that human progress lies in such an application of material. The only check to be alleged is a sentiment, which will coerce none who do not hold that sentiments are the better part of the world's wealth."

DERONDA meanwhile took to a less fashionable form of exercise than riding in Rotten Row. He went often rambling in those parts of London which are most inhabited by common Jews: he walked to the synagogues at times of service, he looked into shops, he observed faces, — a process not very promising of particular discovery. Why did he not address himself to an influential Rabbi or other member of a Jewish community, to consult on the chances of finding a mother named Cohen, with a son named Ezra, and a lost daughter named Mirah? He thought of doing so — after Christmas. The fact was, notwithstanding all his sense of poetry in common things, Deronda, where a keen personal interest was aroused, could not, more than the rest of us, continuously escape suffering from the pressure of that hard unaccommodating Actual, which has never consulted our taste and is entirely unselect. Enthusiasm, we know, dwells at ease among ideas, tolerates garlic breathed in the middle ages, and sees no shabbiness in the official trappings of classic processions: it gets squeamish when ideals press

upon it as something warmly incarnate, and can hardly face them without fainting. Lying dreamily in a boat, imagining one's self in quest of a beautiful maiden's relatives in Cordova elbowed by Jews in the time of Ibn-Gebirol, all the physical incidents can be borne without shock. Or if the scenery of St. Mary Axe and Whitechapel were imaginatively transported to the borders of the Rhine at the end of the eleventh century, when in the ears listening for the signals of the Messiah, the Hep! Hep! Hep! of the Crusaders came like the bay of blood-hounds; and in the presence of those devilish missionaries with sword and firebrand, the crouching figure of the reviled Jew turned round erect, heroic, flashing with sublime constancy in the face of torture and death, — what would the dingy shops and unbeautiful faces signify to the thrill of contemplative emotion? But the fervour of sympathy with which we contemplate a grandiose martyrdom is feeble compared with the enthusiasm that keeps unslacked where there is no danger, no challenge, — nothing but impartial mid-day falling on commonplace, perhaps half-repulsive objects which are really the beloved ideas made flesh. Here undoubtedly lies the chief poetic energy, — in the force of imagination that pierces or exalts the solid fact, instead of floating among cloud pictures. To glory in a prophetic vision of knowledge covering the earth is an easier exercise of believing imagination than to see its beginning in newspaper placards, staring at you from a bridge beyond the cornfields; and it might well happen to most of us dainty people that we were in the

thick of the battle of Armageddon without being aware of anything more than the annoyance of a little explosive smoke and struggling on the ground immediately about us.

It lay in Deronda's nature usually to contemn the feeble, fastidious sympathy which shrinks from the broad life of mankind; but now, with Mirah before him as a living reality whose experience he had to care for, he saw every common Jew and Jewess in the light of comparison with her, and had a presentiment of the collision between her idea of the unknown mother and brother and the discovered fact, — a presentiment all the keener in him because of a suppressed consciousness that a not unlike possibility of collision might lie hidden in his own lot. Not that he would have looked with more complacency of expectation at wealthy Jews, outdoing the lords of the Philistines in their sports; but since there was no likelihood of Mirah's friends being found among that class, their habits did not immediately affect him. In this mood he rambled, without expectation of a more pregnant result than a little preparation of his own mind, perhaps for future theorizing as well as practice, — very much as if, Mirah being related to Welsh miners, he had gone to look more closely at the ways of those people, not without wishing at the same time to get a little light of detail on the history of Strikes.

He really did not long to find anybody in particular; and when, as his habit was, he looked at the name over a shop-door, he was well content that it was not Ezra Cohen. I confess, he particularly desired that Ezra Cohen should not

keep a shop. Wishes are held to be ominous; according to which belief the order of the world is so arranged that if you have an impious objection to a squint, your offspring is the more likely to be born with one; also, that if you happened to desire a squint, you would not get it. This desponding view of probability the hopeful entirely reject, taking their wishes as good and sufficient security for all kinds of fulfilment. Who is absolutely neutral? Deronda, happening one morning to turn into a little side street out of the noise and obstructions of Holborn, felt the scale dip on the desponding side.

He was rather tired of the streets and had paused to hail a hansom cab which he saw coming, when his attention was caught by some fine old clasps in chased silver displayed in the window at his right hand. His first thought was that Lady Mallinger, who had a strictly Protestant taste for such Catholic spoils, might like to have these missal-clasps turned into a bracelet; then his eyes travelled over the other contents of the window, and he saw that the shop was that kind of pawnbroker's where the lead is given to jewellery, lace, and all equivocal objects introduced as *bric-a-brac.* A placard in one corner announced, *Watches and Jewellery exchanged and repaired.* But this survey had been noticed from within; and a figure appeared at the door, looking round at him, and saying in a tone of cordial encouragement, "Good day, sir." The instant was enough for Deronda to see that the face, unmistakably Jewish, belonged to a young man about thirty; and wincing from the shopkeeper's persuasive-

ness that would probably follow, he had no sooner returned the "good day," than he passed to the other side of the street, and beckoned to the cabman to draw up there. From that station he saw the name over the shop-window, — *Ezra Cohen.*

There might be a hundred Ezra Cohens lettered above shop-windows, but Deronda had not seen them. Probably the young man interested in a possible customer was Ezra himself; and he was about the age to be expected in Mirah's brother, who was grown up while she was still a little child. But Deronda's first endeavour as he drove homewards was to convince himself that there was not the slightest warrantable presumption of this Ezra being Mirah's brother; and next, that even if, in spite of good reasoning, he turned out to be that brother, while on inquiry the mother was found to be dead, it was not his — Deronda's — duty to make known the discovery to Mirah. In inconvenient disturbance of this conclusion there came his lately acquired knowledge that Mirah would have a religious desire to know of her mother's death, and also to learn whether her brother were living. How far was he justified in determining another life by his own notions? Was it not his secret complaint against the way in which others had ordered his own life, that he had not open daylight on all its relations, so that he had not, like other men, the full guidance of primary duties?

The immediate relief from this inward debate was the reflection that he had not yet made any real discovery, and that by looking into the facts

more closely he should be certified that there was no demand on him for any decision whatever. He intended to return to that shop as soon as he could conveniently, and buy the clasps for Lady Mallinger. But he was hindered for several days by Sir Hugo, who, about to make an after-dinner speech on a burning topic, wanted Deronda to forage for him on the legal part of the question, besides wasting time every day on argument which always ended in a drawn battle. As on many other questions, they held different sides; but Sir Hugo did not mind this, and when Deronda put his point well, said, with a mixture of satisfaction and regret, —

"Confound it, Dan! why don't you make an opportunity of saying these things in public? You 're wrong, you know. You won't succeed. You 've got the massive sentiment, — the heavy artillery of the country against you. But it 's all the better ground for a young man to display himself on. When I was your age, I should have taken it. And it would be quite as well for you to be in opposition to me here and there. It would throw you more into relief. If you would seize an occasion of this sort to make an impression, you might be in Parliament in no time. And you know that would gratify me."

"I am sorry not to do what would gratify you, sir," said Deronda. "But I cannot persuade myself to look at politics as a profession."

"Why not? If a man is not born into public life by his position in the country, there 's no way for him but to embrace it by his own efforts. The business of the country must be

done, — her Majesty's Government carried on, as the old Duke said. And it never could be, my boy, if everybody looked at politics as if they were prophecy, and demanded an inspired vocation. If you are to get into Parliament, it won't do to sit still and wait for a call either from heaven or constituents."

"I don't want to make a living out of opinions," said Deronda; "especially out of borrowed opinions. Not that I mean to blame other men. I dare say many better fellows than I don't mind getting on to a platform to praise themselves, and giving their word of honour for a party."

"I 'll tell you what, Dan," said Sir Hugo, "a man who sets his face against every sort of humbug is simply a three-cornered, impracticable fellow. There 's a bad style of humbug, but there is also a good style, — one that oils the wheels and makes progress possible. If you are to rule men, you must rule them through their own ideas; and I agree with the Archbishop at Naples who had a St. Januarius procession against the plague. It 's no use having an Order in Council against popular shallowness. There is no action possible without a little acting."

"One may be obliged to give way to an occasional necessity," said Deronda. "But it is one thing to say, 'In this particular case I am forced to put on this foolscap and grin,' and another to buy a pocket foolscap and practise myself in grinning. I can't see any real public expediency that does not keep an ideal before it which makes a limit of deviation from the

direct path. But if I were to set up for a public man I might mistake my own success for public expediency."

It was after this dialogue, which was rather jarring to him, that Deronda set out on his meditated second visit to Ezra Cohen's. He entered the street at the end opposite to the Holborn entrance, and an inward reluctance slackened his pace while his thoughts were transferring what he had just been saying about public expediency to the entirely private difficulty which brought him back again into this unattractive thoroughfare. It might soon become an immediate practical question with him how far he could call it a wise expediency to conceal the fact of close kindred. Such questions turning up constantly in life are often decided in a rough-and-ready way; and to many it will appear an over-refinement in Deronda that he should make any great point of a matter confined to his own knowledge. But we have seen the reasons why he had come to regard concealment as a bane of life, and the necessity of concealment as a mark by which lines of action were to be avoided. The prospect of being urged against the confirmed habit of his mind was naturally grating. He even paused here and there before the most plausible shop-windows for a gentleman to look into, half inclined to decide that he would not increase his knowledge about that modern Ezra, who was certainly not a leader among his people, — a hesitation which proved how, in a man much given to reasoning, a bare possibility may weigh more than the best-clad likelihood; for Deronda's

reasoning had decided that all likelihood was against this man's being Mirah's brother.

One of the shop-windows he paused before was that of a second-hand book-shop, where, on a narrow table outside, the literature of the ages was represented in judicious mixture, from the immortal verse of Homer to the mortal prose of the railway novel. That the mixture was judicious was apparent from Deronda's finding in it something that he wanted, — namely, that wonderful bit of autobiography, the life of the Polish Jew, Salomon Maimon; which, as he could easily slip it into his pocket, he took from its place, and entered the shop to pay for, expecting to see behind the counter a grimy personage showing that *nonchalance* about sales which seems to belong universally to the second-hand book-business. In most other trades you find generous men who are anxious to sell you their wares for your own welfare; but even a Jew will not urge Simson's Euclid on you with an affectionate assurance that you will have pleasure in reading it, and that he wishes he had twenty more of the article, so much is it in request. One is led to fear that a second-hand bookseller may belong to that unhappy class of men who have no belief in the good of what they get their living by, yet keep conscience enough to be morose rather than unctuous in their vocation.

But instead of the ordinary tradesman, he saw, on the dark background of books in the long narrow shop, a figure that was somewhat startling in its unusualness. A man in threadbare clothing, whose age was difficult to guess,

— from the dead yellowish flatness of the flesh, something like an old ivory carving, — was seated on a stool against some bookshelves that projected beyond the short counter, doing nothing more remarkable than reading the yesterday's "Times;" but when he let the paper rest on his lap and looked at the incoming customer, the thought glanced through Deronda that precisely such a physiognomy as that might possibly have been seen in a prophet of the Exile, or in some New Hebrew poet of the mediæval time. It was a finely typical Jewish face, wrought into intensity of expression apparently by a strenuous eager experience in which all the satisfaction had been indirect and far off, and perhaps by some bodily suffering also, which involved that absence of ease in the present. The features were clear-cut, not large; the brow not high but broad, and fully defined by the crisp black hair. It might never have been a particularly handsome face, but it must always have been forcible; and now with its dark, far-off gaze, and yellow pallor in relief on the gloom of the backward shop, one might have imagined one's self coming upon it in some past prison of the Inquisition, which a mob had suddenly burst open; while the look fixed on an incidental customer seemed eager and questioning enough to have been turned on one who might have been a messenger either of delivery or of death. The figure was probably familiar and unexciting enough to the inhabitants of this street; but to Deronda's mind it brought so strange a blending of the unwonted with the common, that there was a perceptible interval

THE BOOK SHOP

A man in threadbare clothing was seated on a stool reading some bookplates.

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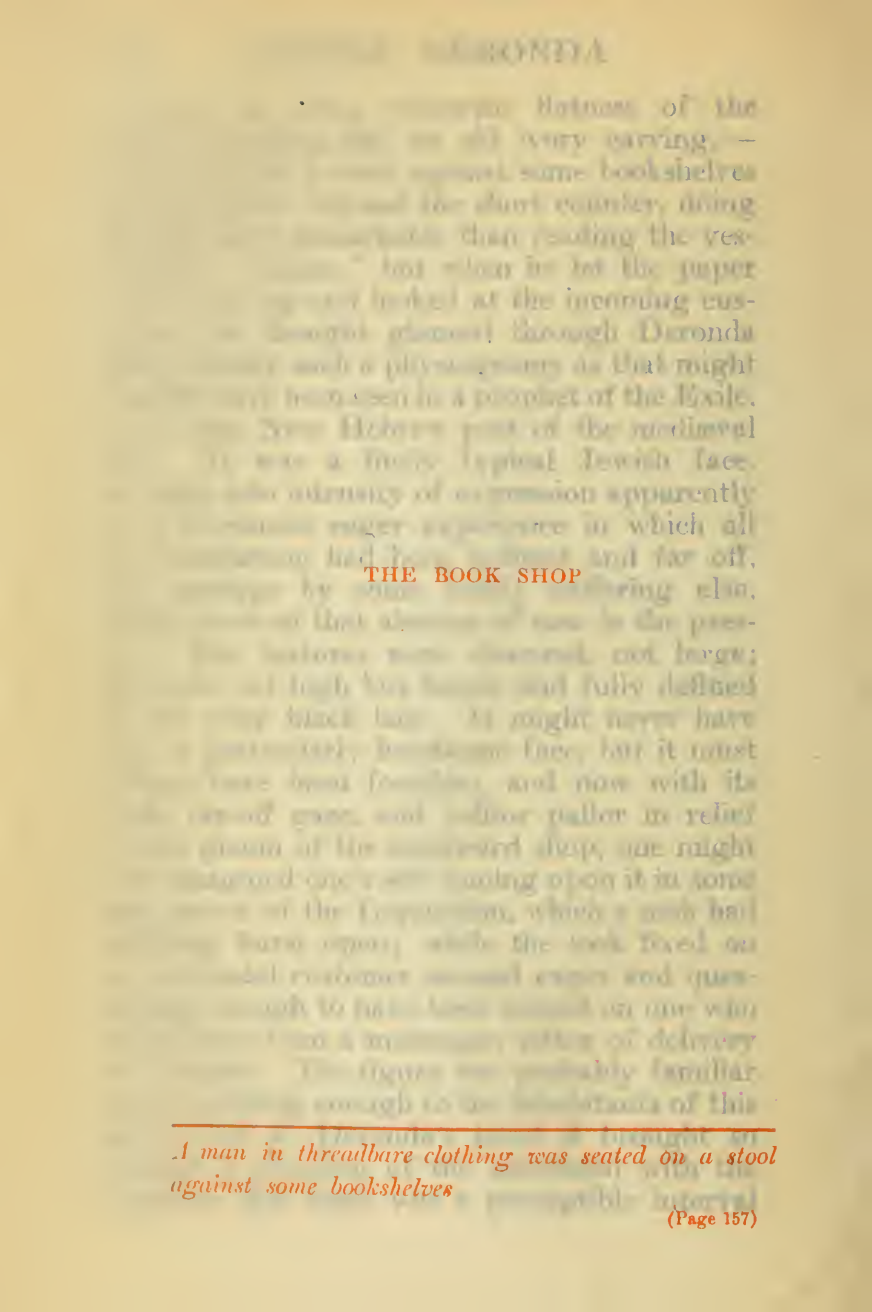
THE BOOK SHOP



A man in threadbare clothing was seated on a stool against some bookshelves

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of mutual observation before he asked his question: "What is the price of this book?"

After taking the book and examining the fly-leaves without rising, the supposed bookseller said, "There is no mark, and Mr. Ram is not in now. I am keeping the shop while he is gone to dinner. What are you disposed to give for it?" He held the book closed on his lap with his hand on it, and looked examiningly at Deronda, over whom there came the disagreeable idea, that possibly this striking personage wanted to see how much could be got out of a customer's ignorance of prices. But without further reflection he said, "Don't you know how much it is worth?"

"Not its market-price. May I ask, have you read it?"

"No. I have read an account of it, which makes me want to buy it."

"You are a man of learning, — you are interested in Jewish history?" This was said in a deepened tone of eager inquiry.

"I am certainly interested in Jewish history," said Deronda, quietly, curiosity overcoming his dislike to the sort of inspection as well as questioning he was under.

But immediately the strange Jew rose from his sitting posture, and Deronda felt a thin hand pressing his arm tightly, while a hoarse, excited voice, not much above a loud whisper, said, —

"You are perhaps of our race?"

Deronda coloured deeply, not liking the grasp, and then answered with a slight shake of the head, "No." The grasp was relaxed,

the hand withdrawn, the eagerness of the face collapsed into uninterested melancholy, as if some possessing spirit which had leaped into the eyes and gestures had sunk back again to the inmost recesses of the frame; and moving further off as he held out the little book, the stranger said in a tone of distant civility, "I believe Mr. Ram will be satisfied with half a crown, sir."

The effect of this change on Deronda — he afterwards smiled when he recalled it — was oddly embarrassing and humiliating, as if some high dignitary had found him deficient and given him his *congé*. There was nothing further to be said, however: he paid his half-crown and carried off his *Salomon Maimon's Lebensgeschichte* with a mere "good morning."

He felt some vexation at the sudden arrest of the interview, and the apparent prohibition that he should know more of this man, who was certainly something out of the common way, — as different probably as a Jew could well be from Ezra Cohen, through whose door Deronda was presently entering, and whose flourishing face glistening on the way to fatness was hanging over the counter in negotiation with some one on the other side of the partition, concerning two plated stoppers and three teaspoons, which lay spread before him. Seeing Deronda enter, he called out, "Mother! Mother!" and then with a familiar nod and smile, said, "Coming, sir, — coming directly."

Deronda could not help looking towards the door from the back with some anxiety, which

was not soothed when he saw a vigorous woman beyond fifty enter and approach to serve him. Not that there was anything very repulsive about her: the worst that could be said was that she had that look of having made her toilet with little water, and by twilight, which is common to unyouthful people of her class, and of having presumably slept in her large earrings, if not in her rings and necklace. In fact, what caused a sinking of heart in Deronda was, her not being so coarse and ugly as to exclude the idea of her being Mirah's mother. Any one who has looked at a face to try and discern signs of known kinship in it will understand his process of conjecture, — how he tried to think away the fat which had gradually disguised the outlines of youth, and to discern what one may call the elementary expressions of the face. He was sorry to see no absolute negative to his fears. Just as it was conceivable that this Ezra, brought up to trade, might resemble the scapegrace father in everything but his knowledge and talent, so it was not impossible that this mother might have had a lovely refined daughter whose type of feature and expression was like Mirah's. The eyebrows had a vexatious similarity of line; and who shall decide how far a face may be masked when the uncherishing years have thrust it far onward in the ever-new procession of youth and age? The good-humour of the glance remained and shone out in a motherly way at Deronda, as she said, in a mild guttural tone, —

"How can I serve you, sir?"

"I should like to look at the silver clasps in

the window," said Deronda; "the larger ones, please, in the corner there."

They were not quite easy to get at from the mother's station, and the son seeing this called out, "I 'll reach 'em, mother, I 'll reach 'em," running forward with alacrity, and then handing the clasps to Deronda with the smiling remark, —

"Mother 's too proud: she wants to do everything herself. That 's why I called her to wait on you, sir. When there 's a particular gentleman customer, sir, I dare n't do any other than call her. But I can't let her do herself a mischief with stretching."

Here Mr. Cohen made way again for his parent, who gave a little guttural amiable laugh while she looked at Deronda, as much as to say, "This boy will be at his jokes, but you see he 's the best son in the world;" and evidently the son enjoyed pleasing her, though he also wished to convey an apology to his distinguished customer for not giving him the advantage of his own exclusive attention.

Deronda began to examine the clasps as if he had many points to observe before he could come to a decision.

"They are only three guineas, sir," said the mother, encouragingly.

"First-rate workmanship, sir, — worth twice the money; only I got 'em a bargain from Cologne," said the son, parenthetically, from a distance.

Meanwhile two new customers entered, and the repeated call, "Addy!" brought from the back of the shop a group that Deronda turned

frankly to stare at, feeling sure that the stare would be held complimentary. The group consisted of a black-eyed young woman who carried a black-eyed little one, its head already well covered with black curls, and deposited it on the counter, from which station it looked round with even more than the usual intelligence of babies; also a robust boy of six and a younger girl, both with black eyes and black-ringed hair, — looking more Semitic than their parents, as the puppy lions show the spots of far-off progenitors. The young woman answering to "Addy" — a sort of paroquet in a bright blue dress, with coral necklace and earrings, her hair set up in a huge bush — looked as complacently lively and unrefined as her husband; and by a certain difference from the mother deepened in Deronda the unwelcome impression that the latter was not so utterly common a Jewess as to exclude her being the mother of Mirah. While that thought was glancing through his mind, the boy had run forward into the shop with an energetic stamp, and setting himself about four feet from Deronda, with his hands in the pockets of his miniature knickerbockers, looked at him with a precocious air of survey. Perhaps it was chiefly with a diplomatic design to linger and ingratiate himself that Deronda patted the boy's head, saying, —

"What is your name, sirrah?"

"Jacob Alexander Cohen," said the small man with much ease and distinctness.

"You are not named after your father, then?"

"No; after my grandfather. He sells knives and razors and scissors, — my grandfather

does," said Jacob, wishing to impress the stranger with that high connection. "He gave me this knife." Here a pocket-knife was drawn forth; and the small fingers, both naturally and artificially dark, opened two blades and a corkscrew with much quickness.

"Is not that a dangerous plaything?" said Deronda, turning to the grandmother.

"*He* 'll never hurt himself, bless you!" said she, contemplating her grandson with placid rapture.

"Have *you* got a knife?" says Jacob, coming closer. His small voice was hoarse in its glibness, as if it belonged to an aged commercial soul, fatigued with bargaining through many generations.

"Yes. Do you want to see it?" said Deronda, taking a small penknife from his waistcoat-pocket.

Jacob seized it immediately and retreated a little, holding the two knives in his palms and bending over them in meditative comparison. By this time the other clients were gone, and the whole family had gathered to the spot, centring their attention on the marvellous Jacob: the father, mother, and grandmother behind the counter, with baby held staggering thereon, and the little girl in front leaning at her brother's elbow to assist him in looking at the knives.

"Mine 's the best," said Jacob, at last, returning Deronda's knife as if he had been entertaining the idea of exchange and had rejected it.

Father and mother laughed aloud with delight. "You won't find Jacob choosing the worst," said Mr. Cohen, winking, with much

confidence in the customer's admiration. Deronda, looking at the grandmother, who had only an inward silent laugh, said, —

"Are these the only grandchildren you have?"

"All. This is my only son," she answered, in a communicative tone, Deronda's glance and manner as usual conveying the impression of sympathetic interest, — which on this occasion answered his purpose well. It seemed to come naturally enough that he should say, —

"And you have no daughter?"

There was an instantaneous change in the mother's face. Her lips closed more firmly, she looked down, swept her hands outward on the counter, and finally turned her back on Deronda to examine some Indian handkerchiefs that hung in pawn behind her. Her son gave a significant glance, set up his shoulders an instant, and just put his finger to his lips, — then said quickly, "I think you 're a first-rate gentleman in the city, sir, if I may be allowed to guess."

"No," said Deronda, with a preoccupied air, "I have nothing to do with the city."

"That 's a bad job. I thought you might be the young principal of a first-rate firm," said Mr. Cohen, wishing to make amends for the check on his customer's natural desire to know more of him and his. "But you understand silver-work, I see."

"A little," said Deronda, taking up the clasps a moment and laying them down again. That unwelcome bit of circumstantial evidence had made his mind busy with a plan which was certainly more like acting than anything he had

been aware of in his own conduct before. But the bare possibility that more knowledge might nullify the evidence, now overpowered the inclination to rest in uncertainty.

"To tell you the truth," he went on, "my errand is not so much to buy as to borrow. I dare say you go into rather heavy transactions occasionally."

"Well, sir, I 've accommodated gentlemen of distinction, — I 'm proud to say it. I would n't exchange my business with any in the world. There 's none more honourable, nor more charitable, nor more necessary for all classes, from the good lady who wants a little of the ready for the baker, to a gentleman like yourself, sir, who may want it for amusement. I like my business, I like my street, and I like my shop. I would n't have it a door further down. And I would n't be without a pawn-shop, sir, to be the Lord Mayor. It puts you in connection with the world at large. I say it 's like the Government revenue, — it embraces the brass as well as the gold of the country. And a man who does n't get money, sir, can't accommodate. Now, what can I do for *you*, sir?"

If an amiable self-satisfaction is the mark of earthly bliss, Solomon in all his glory was a pitiable mortal compared with Mr. Cohen, — clearly one of those persons who, being in excellent spirits about themselves, are willing to cheer strangers by letting them know it. While he was delivering himself with lively rapidity, he took the baby from his wife, and holding it on his arm presented his features to be explored by its small fists. Deronda, not in a cheerful mood,

was rashly pronouncing this Ezra Cohen to be the most unpoetic Jew he had ever met with in books or life: his phraseology was as little as possible like that of the Old Testament; and no shadow of a Suffering Race distinguished his vulgarity of soul from that of a prosperous pink-and-white huckster of the purest English lineage. It is naturally a Christian feeling that a Jew ought not to be conceited. However, this was no reason for not persevering in his project; and he answered at once in adventurous ignorance of technicalities, —

"I have a fine diamond ring to offer as security, — not with me at this moment, unfortunately, for I am not in the habit of wearing it. But I will come again this evening and bring it with me. Fifty pounds at once would be a convenience to me."

"Well, you know, this evening is the Sabbath, young gentleman," said Cohen, "and I go to the *Shool*. The shop will be closed. But accommodation is a work of charity; if you can't get here before, and are any ways pressed, — why, I 'll look at your diamond. You 're perhaps from the West End, — a longish drive?"

"Yes; and your Sabbath begins early at this season. I could be here by five, — will that do?" Deronda had not been without hope that by asking to come on a Friday evening he might get a better opportunity of observing points in the family character, and might even be able to put some decisive question.

Cohen assented; but here the marvellous Jacob, whose *physique* supported a precocity that would have shattered a Gentile of his years,

showed that he had been listening with much comprehension by saying, "You are coming again. Have you got any more knives at home?"

"I think I have one," said Deronda, smiling down at him.

"Has it two blades and a hook — and a white handle like that?" said Jacob, pointing to the waistcoat-pocket.

"I dare say it has."

"Do you like a cork-screw?" said Jacob, exhibiting that article in his own knife again, and looking up with serious inquiry.

"Yes," said Deronda, experimentally.

"Bring your knife, then, and we 'll shwop," said Jacob, returning the knife to his pocket, and stamping about with the sense that he had concluded a good transaction.

The grandmother had now recovered her usual manners, and the whole family watched Deronda radiantly when he caressingly lifted the little girl, to whom he had not hitherto given attention, and seating her on the counter, asked for her name also. She looked at him in silence, and put her fingers to her gold earrings, which he did not seem to have noticed.

"Adelaide Rebekah is her name," said her mother, proudly. "Speak to the gentleman, lovey."

"Shlav'm Shabbes fyock on," said Adelaide Rebekah.

"Her Sabbath frock, she means," said the father, in explanation. "She 'll have her Sabbath frock on this evening."

"And will you let me see you in it, Adelaide?"

said Deronda, with that gentle intonation which came very easily to him.

"Say yes, lovey, — yes, if you please, sir," said her mother, enchanted with this handsome young gentleman, who appreciated remarkable children.

"And will you give me a kiss this evening?" said Deronda, with a hand on each of her little brown shoulders.

Adelaide Rebekah (her miniature crinoline and monumental features corresponded with the combination of her names) immediately put up her lips to pay the kiss in advance; whereupon her father, rising into still more glowing satisfaction with the general meritoriousness of his circumstances, and with the stranger who was an admiring witness, said cordially, —

"You see there 's somebody will be disappointed if you don't come this evening, sir. You won't mind sitting down in our family place and waiting a bit for me, if I 'm not in when you come, sir? I 'll stretch a point to accommodate a gent of your sort. Bring the diamond, and I 'll see what I can do for you."

Deronda thus left the most favourable impression behind him, as a preparation for more easy intercourse. But for his own part those amenities had been carried on under the heaviest spirits. If these were really Mirah's relatives, he could not imagine that even her fervid filial piety could give the reunion with them any sweetness beyond such as could be found in the strict fulfilment of a painful duty. What did this vaunting brother need? And with the most favourable supposition about the hypothetic

mother, Deronda shrank from the image of a first meeting between her and Mirah, and still more from the idea of Mirah's domestication with this family. He took refuge in disbelief. To find an Ezra Cohen when the name was running in your head was no more extraordinary than to find a Josiah Smith under like circumstances; and as to the coincidence about the daughter, it would probably turn out to be a difference. If, however, further knowledge confirmed the more undesirable conclusion, what would be wise expediency? — to try and determine the best consequences by concealment, or to brave other consequences for the sake of that openness which is the sweet fresh air of our moral life.

CHAPTER VII

Er ist geheissen
Israel. Ihn hat verwandelt
Hexenspruch in einen Hund.
. . . . . .
Aber jeden Freitag Abend,
In der Dämmrungstunde, plötzlich
Weicht der Zauber, und der Hund
Wird aufs Neu' ein menschlich Wesen.

HEINE: *Prinzessin Sabbath.*

WHEN Deronda arrived at five o'clock, the shop was closed and the door was opened for him by the Christian servant. When she showed him into the room behind the shop, he was surprised at the prettiness of the scene. The house was old, and rather extensive at the back: probably the large room he now entered was gloomy by daylight, but now it was agreeably lit by a fine old brass lamp with seven oil-lights hanging above the snow-white cloth spread on the central table. The ceiling and walls were smoky, and all the surroundings were dark enough to throw into relief the human figures, which had a Venetian glow of colouring. The grandmother was arrayed in yellowish brown with a large gold chain in lieu of the necklace, and by this light her yellow face with its darkly marked eyebrows and framing roll of gray hair looked as handsome as was necessary for picturesque effect. Young Mrs. Cohen was clad in red and black, with a string of large artificial pearls wound round and round her neck: the baby

lay asleep in the cradle under a scarlet counterpane; Adelaide Rebekah was in braided amber; and Jacob Alexander was in black velveteen with scarlet stockings. As the four pairs of black eyes all glistened a welcome at Deronda, he was almost ashamed of the supercilious dislike these happy-looking creatures had raised in him by daylight. Nothing could be more cordial than the greeting he received, and both mother and grandmother seemed to gather more dignity from being seen on the private hearth, showing hospitality. He looked round with some wonder at the old furniture: the oaken bureau and high side table must surely be mere matters of chance and economy, and not due to the family taste. A large dish of blue-and-yellow ware was set up on the side table, and flanking it were two old silver vessels; in front of them a large volume in darkened vellum with a deep-ribbed back. In the corner at the farther end was an open door into an inner room, where there was also a light.

Deronda took in these details by parenthetic glances while he met Jacob's pressing solicitude about the knife. He had taken the pains to buy one with the requisites of the hook and white handle, and produced it on demand, saying, —

"Is that the sort of thing you want, Jacob?"

It was subjected to a severe scrutiny, the hook and blades were opened, and the article of barter with the corkscrew was drawn forth for comparison.

"Why do you like a hook better than a corkscrew?" said Deronda.

"'Caush I can get hold of things with a hook.

A corkscrew won't go into anything but corks. But it 's better for you, you can draw corks."

"You agree to change, then?" said Deronda, observing that the grandmother was listening with delight.

"What else have you got in your pockets?" said Jacob, with deliberative seriousness.

"Hush, hush, Jacob, love," said the grandmother. And Deronda, mindful of discipline, answered, —

"I think I must not tell you that. Our business was with the knives."

Jacob looked up into his face scanningly for a moment or two, and apparently arriving at his conclusions, said gravely, —

"I 'll shwop," handing the cork-screw knife to Deronda, who pocketed it with corresponding gravity.

Immediately the small son of Shem ran off into the next room, whence his voice was heard in rapid chat; and then ran back again, — when, seeing his father enter, he seized a little velveteen hat which lay on a chair and put it on to approach him. Cohen kept on his own hat, and took no notice of the visitor, but stood still while the two children went up to him and clasped his knees: then he laid his hands on each in turn, and uttered his Hebrew benediction; whereupon the wife, who had lately taken baby from the cradle, brought it up to her husband, and held it under his outstretched hands, to be blessed in its sleep. For the moment Deronda thought that this pawnbroker proud of his vocation was not utterly prosaic.

"Well, sir, you found your welcome in my

family, I think," said Cohen, putting down his hat and becoming his former self. "And you 've been punctual. Nothing like a little stress here," he added, tapping his side pocket as he sat down. "It 's good for us all in our turn. I 've felt it when I 've had to make up payments. I began early, — had to turn myself about and put myself into shapes to fit every sort of box. It 's bracing to the mind. Now then! let us see, let us see."

"That is the ring I spoke of," said Deronda, taking it from his finger. "I believe it cost a hundred pounds. It will be a sufficient pledge to you for fifty, I think. I shall probably redeem it in a month or so."

Cohen's glistening eyes seemed to get a little nearer together as he met the ingenuous look of this crude young gentleman, who apparently supposed that redemption was a satisfaction to pawnbrokers. He took the ring, examined and returned it, saying with indifference, "Good, good. We 'll talk of it after our meal. Perhaps you 'll join us, if you 've no objection. Me and my wife 'll feel honoured, and so will mother; won't you, mother?"

The invitation was doubly echoed, and Deronda gladly accepted it. All now turned and stood round the table. No dish was at present seen except one covered with a napkin; and Mrs. Cohen had placed a china bowl near her husband, that he might wash his hands in it. But after putting on his hat again, he paused, and called in a loud voice, "Mordecai!"

Can this be part of the religious ceremony? thought Deronda, not knowing what might be

expected of the ancient hero. But he heard a "Yes" from the next room, which made him look towards the open door; and there, to his astonishment, he saw the figure of the enigmatic Jew whom he had this morning met with in the book-shop. Their eyes met, and Mordecai looked as much surprised as Deronda, — neither in his surprise making any sign of recognition. But when Mordecai was seating himself at the end of the table, he just bent his head to the guest in a cold and distant manner, as if the disappointment of the morning remained a disagreeable association with this new acquaintance.

Cohen now washed his hands, pronouncing Hebrew words the while: afterwards he took off the napkin covering the dish, and disclosed the two long flat loaves besprinkled with seed, — the memorial of the manna that fed the wandering forefathers, — and breaking off small pieces gave one to each of the family, including Adelaide Rebekah, who stood on the chair with her whole length exhibited in her amber-coloured garment, her little Jewish nose lengthened by compression of the lip in the effort to make a suitable appearance. Cohen then uttered another Hebrew blessing, and after that, the male heads were uncovered, all seated themselves, and the meal went on without any peculiarity that interested Deronda. He was not very conscious of what dishes he ate from, being preoccupied with a desire to turn the conversation in a way that would enable him to ask some leading question; and also with thinking of Mordecai, between whom and himself there was an exchange of fascinated, half-furtive glances.

Mordecai had no handsome Sabbath garment, but instead of the threadbare rusty black coat of the morning he wore one of light drab, which looked as if it had once been a handsome loose paletot now shrunk with washing; and this change of clothing gave a still stronger accentuation to his dark-haired, eager face, which might have belonged to the prophet Ezekiel, — also probably not modish in the eyes of contemporaries. It was noticeable that the thin tails of the fried fish were given to Mordecai; and in general the sort of share assigned to a poor relation — no doubt a "survival" of prehistoric practice, not yet generally admitted to be superstitious.

Mr. Cohen kept up the conversation with much liveliness, introducing as subjects always in taste (the Jew is proud of his loyalty) the Queen and the Royal Family, the Emperor and Empress of the French, — into which both grandmother and wife entered with zest. Mrs. Cohen the younger showed an accurate memory of distinguished birthdays; and the elder assisted her son in informing the guest of what occurred when the Emperor and Empress were in England and visited the city, ten years before.

"I dare say you know all about it better than we do, sir," said Cohen, repeatedly, by way of preface to full information; and the interesting statements were kept up in a trio.

"Our baby is named *Eu*genie Esther," said young Mrs. Cohen, vivaciously.

"It 's wonderful how the Emperor 's like a cousin of mine in the face," said the grand-

mother; "it struck me like lightning when I caught sight of him. I could n't have thought it."

"Mother and me went to see the Emperor and Empress at the Crystal Palace," said Mr. Cohen. "I had a fine piece of work to take care of mother; she might have been squeezed flat, — though she was pretty near as lusty then as she is now. I said, if I had a hundred mothers I 'd never take one of 'em to see the Emperor and Empress at the Crystal Palace again; and you may think a man can't afford it when he 's got but one mother, — not if he 'd ever so big an insurance on her." He stroked his mother's shoulder affectionately, and chuckled a little at his own humour.

"Your mother has been a widow a long while, perhaps, said Deronda, seizing his opportunity. "That has made your care for her the more needful."

"Ay, ay, it 's a good many *yore-zeit* since I had to manage for her and myself," said Cohen, quickly. "I went early to it. It 's that makes you a sharp knife."

"What does — what makes a sharp knife, father?" said Jacob, his cheek very much swollen with sweet-cake.

The father winked at his guest and said, "Having your nose put on the grindstone."

Jacob slipped from his chair with the piece of sweet-cake in his hand, and going close up to Mordecai, who had been totally silent hitherto, said, "What does that mean, — putting my nose to the grindstone?"

"It means that you are to bear being hurt

without making a noise," said Mordecai, turning his eyes benignantly on the small face close to his. Jacob put the corner of the cake into Mordecai's mouth as an invitation to bite, saying meanwhile, "I sha'n't though," and keeping his eyes on the cake to observe how much of it went in this act of generosity. Mordecai took a bite and smiled, evidently meaning to please the lad; and the little incident made them both look more lovable. Deronda, however, felt with some vexation that he had taken little by his question.

"I fancy that is the right quarter for learning," said he, carrying on the subject that he might have an excuse for addressing Mordecai, to whom he turned and said, "You have been a great student, I imagine."

"I have studied," was the quiet answer. "And you? — You know German, by the book you were buying."

"Yes, I have studied in Germany. Are you generally engaged in bookselling?" said Deronda.

"No; I only go to Mr. Ram's shop every day to keep it while he goes to meals," said Mordecai, who was now looking at Deronda with what seemed a revival of his original interest: it seemed as if the face had some attractive indication for him which now neutralized the former disappointment. After a slight pause he said, "Perhaps you know Hebrew?"

"I am sorry to say, not at all."

Mordecai's countenance fell: he cast down his eyelids, looking at his hands, which lay crossed before him, and said no more. Deronda had

now noticed more decisively than in their former interview a difficulty of breathing, which he thought must be a sign of consumption.

"I 've had something else to do than to get book-learning," said Mr. Cohen, — "I 've had to make myself knowing about useful things. I know stones well," — here he pointed to Deronda's ring. "I 'm not afraid of taking that ring of yours at my own valuation. But now," he added, with a certain drop in his voice to a lower, more familiar nasal, "what do you want for it?"

"Fifty or sixty pounds," Deronda answered, rather too carelessly.

Cohen paused a little, thrust his hands into his pockets, fixed on Deronda a pair of glistening eyes that suggested a miraculous guinea-pig, and said, "Could n't do you that. Happy to oblige, but could n't go that lengths. Forty pound — say forty — I 'll let you have forty on it."

Deronda was aware that Mordecai had looked up again at the words implying a monetary affair, and was now examining him again, while he said, "Very well; I shall redeem it in a month or so."

"Good. I 'll make you out the ticket by and by," said Cohen, indifferently. Then he held up his finger as a sign that conversation must be deferred. He, Mordecai, and Jacob put on their hats, and Cohen opened a thanksgiving, which was carried on by responses, till Mordecai delivered himself alone at some length, in a solemn chanting tone, with his chin slightly uplifted and his thin hands clasped easily before him. Not

only in his accent and tone, but in his freedom from the self-consciousness which has reference to others' approbation, there could hardly have been a stronger contrast to the Jew at the other end of the table. It was an unaccountable conjunction, — the presence among these common, prosperous, shopkeeping types, of a man who, in an emaciated threadbare condition, imposed a certain awe on Deronda, and an embarrassment at not meeting his expectations.

No sooner had Mordecai finished his devotional strain, than rising, with a slight bend of his head to the stranger, he walked back into his room, and shut the door behind him.

"That seems to be rather a remarkable man," said Deronda, turning to Cohen, who immediately set up his shoulders, put out his tongue slightly, and tapped his own brow. It was clearly to be understood that Mordecai did not come up to the standard of sanity which was set by Mr. Cohen's view of men and things.

"Does he belong to your family?" said Deronda. This idea appeared to be rather ludicrous to the ladies as well as to Cohen, and the family interchanged looks of amusement.

"No, no," said Cohen. "Charity! charity! He worked for me, and when he got weaker and weaker I took him in. He 's an incumbrance; but he brings a blessing down, and he teaches the boy. Besides, he does the repairing at the watches and jewellery."

Deronda hardly abstained from smiling at this mixture of kindliness and the desire to justify it in the light of a calculation; but his willingness to speak further of Mordecai, whose character

was made the more enigmatically striking by these new details, was baffled. Mr. Cohen immediately dismissed the subject by reverting to the "accommodation," which was also an act of charity, and proceeded to make out the ticket, get the forty pounds, and present them both in exchange for the diamond ring. Deronda, feeling that it would be hardly delicate to protract his visit beyond the settlement of the business which was its pretext, had to take his leave, with no more decided result than the advance of forty pounds and the pawn-ticket in his breast-pocket, to make a reason for returning when he came up to town after Christmas. He was resolved that he would then endeavour to gain a little more insight into the character and history of Mordecai; from whom also he might gather something decisive about the Cohens, — for example, the reason why it was forbidden to ask Mrs. Cohen the elder whether she had a daughter.

Book Five

MORDECAI

CHAPTER I

"Were uneasiness of conscience measured by extent of crime, human history had been different, and one should look to see the contrivers of greedy wars and the mighty marauders of the money-market in one troop of self-lacerating penitents with the meaner robber and cut-purse and the murderer that doth his butchery in small with his own hand. No doubt wickedness hath its rewards to distribute; but whoso wins in this devil's game must needs be baser, more cruel, more brutal than the order of this planet will allow for the multitude born of woman, the most of these carrying a form of conscience, — a fear which is the shadow of justice, a pity which is the shadow of love, — that hindereth from the prize of serene wickedness, itself difficult of maintenance in our composite flesh."

ON the 29th of December Deronda knew that the Grandcourts had arrived at the Abbey, but he had had no glimpse of them before he went to dress for dinner. There had been a splendid fall of snow, allowing the party of children the rare pleasures of snow-balling and snow-building, and in the Christmas holidays the Mallinger girls were content with no amusement unless it were joined in and managed by " cousin," as they had always called Deronda. After that outdoor exertion he had been playing billiards, and thus the hours had passed without his dwelling at all on the prospect of meeting Gwendolen at dinner. Nevertheless that prospect was interesting to him; and when, a little tired and heated with working at amuse-

ment, he went to his room before the half-hour bell had rung, he began to think of it with some speculation on the sort of influence her marriage with Grandcourt would have on her, and on the probability that there would be some discernible shades of change in her manner since he saw her at Diplow, just as there had been since his first vision of her at Leubronn.

"I fancy there are some natures one could see growing or degenerating every day, if one watched them," was his thought. "I suppose some of us go on faster than others; and I am sure she is a creature who keeps strong traces of anything that has once impressed her. That little affair of the necklace, and the idea that somebody thought her gambling wrong, had evidently bitten into her. But such impressibility tells both ways: it may drive one to desperation as soon as to anything better. And whatever fascinations Grandcourt may have for capricious tastes, good heavens! who can believe that he would call out the tender affections in daily companionship? One might be tempted to horsewhip him for the sake of getting some show of passion into his face and speech. I 'm afraid she married him out of ambition, — to escape poverty. But why did she run out of his way at first? The poverty came after, though. Poor thing! she may have been urged into it. How can one feel anything else than pity for a young creature like that — full of unused life — ignorantly rash — hanging all her blind expectations on that remnant of a human being!"

Doubtless the phrases which Deronda's meditation applied to the bridegroom were the less

complimentary for the excuses and pity in which it clad the bride. His notion of Grandcourt as a "remnant" was founded on no particular knowledge, but simply on the impression which ordinary polite intercourse had given him that Grandcourt had worn out all his natural healthy interest in things.

In general, one may be sure that whenever a marriage of any mark takes place, male acquaintances are likely to pity the bride, female acquaintances the bridegroom: each, it is thought, might have done better; and especially where the bride is charming, young gentlemen on the scene are apt to conclude that she can have no real attachment to a fellow so uninteresting to themselves as her husband, but has married him on other grounds. Who under such circumstances pities the husband? Even his female friends are apt to think his position retributive: he should have chosen some one else. But perhaps Deronda may be excused that he did not prepare any pity for Grandcourt, who had never struck acquaintances as likely to come out of his experiences with more suffering than he inflicted; whereas for Gwendolen, young, headlong, eager for pleasure, fed with the flattery which makes a lovely girl believe in her divine right to rule, — how quickly might life turn from expectancy to a bitter sense of the irremediable! After what he had seen of her he must have had rather dull feelings not to have looked forward with some interest to her entrance into the room. Still, since the honeymoon was already three weeks in the distance, and Gwendolen had been enthroned not only at Ryelands but at Diplow, she was likely

to have composed her countenance with suitable manifestation or concealment, not being one who would indulge the curious by a helpless exposure of her feelings.

A various party had been invited to meet the new couple: the old aristocracy was represented by Lord and Lady Pentreath; the old gentry by young Mr. and Mrs. Fitzadam of the Worcestershire branch of the Fitzadams; politics and the public good, as specialized in the cider interest, by Mr. Fenn, member for West Orchards, accompanied by his two daughters; Lady Mallinger's family, by her brother, Mr. Raymond, and his wife; the useful bachelor element by Mr. Sinker, the eminent counsel, and by Mr. Vandernoodt, whose acquaintance Sir Hugo had found pleasant enough at Leubronn to be adopted in England.

All had assembled in the drawing-room before the new couple appeared. Meanwhile the time was being passed chiefly in noticing the children, — various little Raymonds, nephews and nieces of Lady Mallinger's, with her own three girls, who were always allowed to appear at this hour. The scene was really delightful, — enlarged by full-length portraits with deep backgrounds, inserted in the cedar panelling, — surmounted by a ceiling that glowed with the rich colours of the coats of arms ranged between the sockets, — illuminated almost as much by the red fire of oak-boughs as by the pale wax-lights, — stilled by the deep-piled carpet and by the high English breeding that subdues all voices; while the mixture of ages, from the white-haired Lord and Lady Pentreath to the four-year-old Edgar Raymond,

gave a varied charm to the living groups. Lady Mallinger, with fair matronly roundness and mildly prominent blue eyes, moved about in her black velvet, carrying a tiny white dog on her arm as a sort of finish to her costume; the children were scattered among the ladies, while most of the gentlemen were standing rather aloof, conversing with that very moderate vivacity observable during the long minutes before dinner. Deronda was a little out of the circle in a dialogue fixed upon him by Mr. Vandernoodt, a man of the best Dutch blood imported at the revolution: for the rest, one of those commodious persons in society who are nothing particular themselves, but are understood to be acquainted with the best in every department; close-clipped, pale-eyed, *nonchalant*, as good a foil as could well be found to the intense colouring and vivid gravity of Deronda.

He was talking of the bride and bridegroom, whose appearance was being waited for. Mr. Vandernoodt was an industrious gleaner of personal details, and could probably tell everything about a great philosopher or physicist except his theories or discoveries:. he was now implying that he had learned many facts about Grandcourt since meeting him at Leubronn.

"Men who have seen a good deal of life don't always end by choosing their wives so well. He has had rather an anecdotic history, — gone rather deep into pleasures, I fancy, lazy as he is. But, of course, you know all about him."

"No, really," said Deronda, in an indifferent tone. "I know little more of him than that he is Sir Hugo's nephew."

But now the door opened, and deferred any satisfaction of Mr. Vandernoodt's communicativeness.

The scene was one to set off any figure of distinction that entered on it; and certainly when Mr. and Mrs. Grandcourt entered, no beholder could deny that their figures had distinction. The bridegroom had neither more nor less easy perfection of costume, neither more nor less well-cut impassibility of face, than before his marriage. It was to be supposed of him that he would put up with nothing less than the best in outward equipment, wife included; and the bride was what he might have been expected to choose. "By George, I think she 's handsomer, if anything!" said Mr. Vandernoodt. And Deronda was of the same opinion, but he said nothing. The white silk and diamonds — it may seem strange, but she did wear the diamonds on her neck, in her ears, in her hair — might have something to do with the new imposingness of her beauty, which flashed on him as more unquestionable if not more thoroughly satisfactory than when he had first seen her at the gaming-table. Some faces which are peculiar in their beauty are like original works of art: for the first time they are almost always met with question. But in seeing Gwendolen at Diplow, Deronda had discerned in her more than he had expected of that tender appealing charm which we call womanly. Was there any new change since then? He distrusted his impressions; but as he saw her receiving greetings with what seemed a proud cold quietude and a superficial smile, there seemed to be at work within her the same demonic force

that had possessed her when she took him in her resolute glance and turned away a loser from the gaming-table. There was no time for more of a conclusion, — no time even for him to give his greeting before the summons to dinner.

He sat not far from opposite to her at table, and could sometimes hear what she said in answer to Sir Hugo, who was at his liveliest in conversation with her; but though he looked towards her with the intention of bowing, she gave him no opportunity of doing so for some time. At last Sir Hugo, who might have imagined that they had already spoken to each other, said, "Deronda, you will like to hear what Mrs. Grandcourt tells me about your favourite Klesmer."

Gwendolen's eyelids had been lowered; and Deronda, already looking at her, thought he discovered a quivering reluctance as she was obliged to raise them and return his unembarrassed bow and smile, her own smile being one of the lip merely. It was but an instant, and Sir Hugo continued without pause, —

"The Arrowpoints have condoned the marriage, and he is spending the Christmas with his bride at Quetcham."

"I suppose he will be glad of it for the sake of his wife, else I dare say he would not have minded keeping at a distance," said Deronda.

"It 's a sort of troubadour story," said Lady Pentreath, an easy, deep-voiced old lady; "I 'm glad to find a little romance left among us. I think our young people now are getting too worldly wise."

"It shows the Arrowpoints' good sense, how-

ever, to have adopted the affair, after the fuss in the papers," said Sir Hugo. "And disowning your own child because of a *mésalliance* is something like disowning your one eye: everybody knows it 's yours, and you have no other to make an appearance with."

"As to *mésalliance,* there 's no blood on any side," said Lady Pentreath. "Old Admiral Arrowpoint was one of Nelson's men, you know, — a doctor's son. And we all know how the mother's money came."

"If there were any *mésalliance* in the case, I should say it was on Klesmer's side," said Deronda.

"Ah, you think it is a case of the immortal marrying the mortal. What is your opinion?" said Sir Hugo, looking at Gwendolen.

"I have no doubt that Herr Klesmer thinks himself immortal. But I dare say his wife will burn as much incense before him as he requires," said Gwendolen. She had recovered any composure that she might have lost.

"Don't you approve of a wife burning incense before her husband?" said Sir Hugo, with an air of jocoseness.

"Oh, yes," said Gwendolen, "if it were only to make others believe in him." She paused a moment, and then said with more gayety, "When Herr Klesmer admires his own genius, it will take off some of the absurdity if his wife says Amen."

"Klesmer is no favourite of yours, I see," said Sir Hugo.

"I think very highly of him, I assure you," said Gwendolen. "His genius is quite above my

judgment, and I know him to be exceedingly generous."

She spoke with the sudden seriousness which is often meant to correct an unfair or indiscreet sally, having a bitterness against Klesmer in her secret soul which she knew herself unable to justify. Deronda was wondering what he should have thought of her if he had never heard of her before: probably that she put on a little hardness and defiance by way of concealing some painful consciousness, — if, indeed, he could imagine her manners otherwise than in the light of his suspicion. But why did she not recognize him with more friendliness?

Sir Hugo, by way of changing the subject, said to her: "Is not this a beautiful room? It was part of the refectory of the Abbey. There was a division made by those pillars and the three arches, and afterwards they were built up. Else it was half as large again originally. There used to be rows of Benedictines sitting where we are sitting. Suppose we were suddenly to see the lights burning low and the ghosts of the old monks rising behind all our chairs!"

"Please don't!" said Gwendolen, with a playful shudder. "It is very nice to come after ancestors and monks, but they should know their places and keep underground. I should be rather frightened to go about this house all alone. I suppose the old generations must be angry with us because we have altered things so much."

"Oh, the ghosts must be of all political parties," said Sir Hugo. "And those fellows who wanted to change things while they lived and could n't do it must be on our side. But if you

would not like to go over the house alone, you will like to go in company, I hope. You and Grandcourt ought to see it all. And we will ask Deronda to go round with us. He is more learned about it than I am." The baronet was in the most complaisant of humours.

Gwendolen stole a glance at Deronda, who must have heard what Sir Hugo said, for he had his face turned towards them, helping himself to an *entrée;* but he looked as impassive as a picture. At the notion of Deronda's showing her and Grandcourt the place which was to be theirs, and which she with painful emphasis remembered might have been his (perhaps, if others had acted differently), certain thoughts had rushed in, — thoughts often repeated within her, but now returning on an occasion embarrassingly new; and she was conscious of something furtive and awkward in her glance, which Sir Hugo must have noticed. With her usual readiness of resource against betrayal, she said playfully, "You don't know how much I am afraid of Mr. Deronda."

"How 's that? Because you think him too learned?" said Sir Hugo, whom the peculiarity of her glance had not escaped.

"No. It is ever since I first saw him at Leubronn. Because when he came to look on at the roulette-table, I began to lose. He cast an evil eye on my play. He did n't approve it. He has told me so. And now whatever I do before him, I am afraid he will cast an evil eye upon it."

"Gad! I 'm rather afraid of him myself when he does n't approve," said Sir Hugo, glancing at Deronda; and then, turning his face towards Gwendolen, he said less audibly,

"I don't think ladies generally object to have his eyes upon them." The baronet's small chronic complaint of facetiousness was at this moment almost as annoying to Gwendolen as it often was to Deronda.

"I object to any eyes that are critical," she said, in a cool high voice, with a turn of her neck. "Are there many of these old rooms left in the Abbey?"

"Not many. There is a fine cloistered court with a long gallery above it. But the finest bit of all is turned into stables. It is part of the old church. When I improved the place, I made the most of every other bit; but it was out of my reach to change the stables, so the horses have the benefit of the fine old choir. You must go and see it."

"I shall like to see the horses as well as the building," said Gwendolen.

"Oh, I have no stud to speak of. Grandcourt will look with contempt at my horses," said Sir Hugo. "I 've given up hunting, and go on in a jog-trot way, as becomes an old gentleman with daughters. The fact is, I went in for doing too much at this place. We all lived at Diplow for two years while the alterations were going on. Do you like Diplow?"

"Not particularly," said Gwendolen, with indifference. One would have thought that the young lady had all her life had more family seats than she cared to go to.

"Ah! it will not do after Ryelands," said Sir Hugo, well pleased. "Grandcourt, I know, took it for the sake of the hunting. But he found something so much better there," added

the baronet, lowering his voice, " that he might well prefer it to any other place in the world."

" It has one attraction for me," said Gwendolen, passing over this compliment with a chill smile, — " that it is within reach of Offendene."

" I understand that," said Sir Hugo, and then let the subject drop.

What amiable baronet can escape the effect of a strong desire for a particular possession! Sir Hugo would have been glad that Grandcourt, with or without reason, should prefer any other place to Diplow; but inasmuch as in the pure process of wishing we can always make the conditions of our gratification benevolent, he did wish that Grandcourt's convenient disgust for Diplow should not be associated with his marriage of this very charming bride. Gwendolen was much to the baronet's taste; but, as he observed afterwards to Lady Mallinger, he should never have taken her for a young girl who had married beyond her expectations.

Deronda had not heard much of this conversation, having given his attention elsewhere; but the glimpses he had of Gwendolen's manner deepened the impression that it had something newly artificial.

Later in the drawing-room, Deronda, at somebody's request, sat down to the piano and sang. Afterwards Mrs. Raymond took his place; and on rising he observed that Gwendolen had left her seat, and had come to this end of the room, as if to listen more fully, but was now standing with her back to every one, apparently contemplating a fine cowled head carved in ivory which hung over a small table. He longed to go to her and

speak. Why should he not obey such an impulse, as he would have done towards any other lady in the room? Yet he hesitated some moments, observing the graceful lines of her back, but not moving.

If you have any reason for not indulging a wish to speak to a fair woman, it is a bad plan to look long at her back: the wish to see what it screens becomes the stronger. There may be a very sweet smile on the other side. Deronda ended by going to the end of the small table, at right angles to Gwendolen's position; but before he could speak she had turned on him no smile, but such an appealing look of sadness, so utterly different from the chill effort of her recognition at table, that his speech was checked. For what was an appreciable space of time to both, though the observation of others could not have measured it, they looked at each other, — she seeming to take the deep rest of confession, he with an answering depth of sympathy that neutralized other feelings.

"Will you not join in the music?" he said, by way of meeting the necessity for speech.

That her look of confession had been involuntary was shown by that just perceptible shake and change of countenance with which she roused herself to reply calmly, "I join in it by listening. I am fond of music."

"Are you not a musician?"

"I have given a great deal of time to music. But I have not talent enough to make it worth while. I shall never sing again."

"But if you are fond of music, it will always be worth while in private, for your own delight.

I make it a virtue to be content with my middlingness," said Deronda, smiling; "it is always pardonable, so that one does not ask others to take it for superiority."

"I cannot imitate you," said Gwendolen, recovering her tone of artificial vivacity. "To be middling with me is another phrase for being dull. And the worst fault I have to find with the world is, that it is dull. Do you know, I am going to justify gambling in spite of you. It is a refuge from dulness."

"I don't admit the justification," said Deronda. "I think what we call the dulness of things is a disease in ourselves. Else how could any one find an intense interest in life? And many do."

"Ah, I see! The fault I find in the world is my own fault," said Gwendolen, smiling at him. Then after a moment, looking up at the ivory again, she said, "Do *you* never find fault with the world or with others?"

"Oh, yes. When I am in a grumbling mood."

"And hate people? Confess you hate them when they stand in your way, — when their gain is your loss? That is your own phrase, you know."

"We are often standing in each other's way when we can't help it. I think it is stupid to hate people on that ground."

"But if they injure you and could have helped it?" said Gwendolen, with a hard intensity unaccountable in incidental talk like this.

Deronda wondered at her choice of subjects. A painful impression arrested his answer a moment, but at last he said, with a graver, deeper

intonation, "Why, then, after all, I prefer my place to theirs."

"There I believe you are right," said Gwendolen, with a sudden little laugh, and turned to join the group at the piano.

Deronda looked round for Grandcourt, wondering whether he followed his bride's movements with any attention; but it was rather undiscerning in him to suppose that he could find out the fact. Grandcourt had a delusive mood of observing whatever had an interest for him, which could be surpassed by no sleepy-eyed animal on the watch for prey. At that moment he was plunged in the depth of an easy-chair, being talked to by Mr. Vandernoodt, who apparently thought the acquaintance of such a bridegroom worth cultivating; and an incautious person might have supposed it safe to telegraph secrets in front of him, the common prejudice being that your quick observer is one whose eyes have quick movements. Not at all. If you want a respectable witness who will see nothing inconvenient, choose a vivacious gentleman, very much on the alert, with two eyes wide open, a glass in one of them, and an entire impartiality as to the purpose of looking. If Grandcourt cared to keep any one under his power, he saw them out of the corners of his long narrow eyes, and if they went behind him, he had a constructive process by which he knew what they were doing there. He knew perfectly well where his wife was, and how she was behaving. Was he going to be a jealous husband? Deronda imagined that to be likely; but his imagination was as much astray about Grandcourt as it would have been about an unex-

plored continent where all the species were peculiar. He did not conceive that he himself was a likely subject of jealousy, or that he should give any pretext for it; but the suspicion that a wife is not happy naturally leads one to speculate on the husband's private deportment; and Deronda found himself after one o'clock in the morning in the rather ludicrous position of sitting up severely holding a Hebrew grammar in his hands (for somehow, in deference to Mordecai, he had begun to study Hebrew), with the consciousness that he had been in that attitude nearly an hour, and had thought of nothing but Gwendolen and her husband. To be an unusual young man means for the most part to get a difficult mastery over the usual, which is often like the sprite of ill-luck you pack up your goods to escape from, and see grinning at you from the top of your luggage-van. The peculiarities of Deronda's nature had been acutely touched by the brief incidents and words which made the history of his intercourse with Gwendolen; and this evening's slight addition had given them an importunate recurrence. It was not vanity, — it was ready sympathy that had made him alive to a certain appealingness in her behaviour towards him; and the difficulty with which she had seemed to raise her eyes to bow to him, in the first instance, was to be interpreted now by that unmistakable look of involuntary confidence which she had afterwards turned on him under the consciousness of his approach.

"What is the use of it all?" thought Deronda, as he threw down his grammar, and began to undress. "I can't do anything to help her, —

nobody can, if she has found out her mistake already. And it seems to me that she has a dreary lack of the ideas that might help her. Strange and piteous to think what a centre of wretchedness a delicate piece of human flesh like that might be, wrapped round with fine raiment, her ears pierced for gems, her head held loftily, her mouth all smiling pretence, the poor soul within her sitting in sick distaste of all things! But what do I know of her? There may be a demon in her to match the worst husband, for what I can tell. She was clearly an ill-educated, worldly girl: perhaps she is a coquette."

This last reflection, not much believed in, was a self-administered dose of caution, prompted partly by Sir Hugo's much-contemned joking on the subject of flirtation. Deronda resolved not to volunteer any *tête-à-tête* with Gwendolen during the few days of her stay at the Abbey; and he was capable of keeping a resolve in spite of much inclination to the contrary.

But a man cannot resolve about a woman's actions, least of all about those of a woman like Gwendolen, in whose nature there was a combination of proud reserve with rashness, of perilously poised terror with defiance, which might alternately flatter and disappoint control. Few words could less represent her than "coquette." She had a native love of homage, and belief in her own power; but no cold artifice for the sake of enslaving. And the poor thing's belief in her power, with her other dreams before marriage, had often to be thrust aside now like the toys of a sick child, which it looks at with dull eyes, and has no heart to play with, however it may try.

The next day at lunch Sir Hugo said to her, "The thaw has gone on like magic, and it 's so pleasant out of doors just now, — shall we go and see the stables and the other old bits about the place?"

"Yes, pray," said Gwendolen. "You will like to see the stables, Henleigh?" she added, looking at her husband.

"Uncommonly," said Grandcourt, with an indifference which seemed to give irony to the word, as he returned her look. It was the first time Deronda had seen them speak to each other since their arrival, and he thought their exchange of looks as cold and official as if it had been a ceremony to keep up a charter. Still, the English fondness for reserve will account for much negation; and Grandcourt's manners with an extra veil of reserve over them might be expected to present the extreme type of the national taste.

"Who else is inclined to make the tour of the house and premises?" said Sir Hugo. "The ladies must muffle themselves: there is only just about time to do it well before sunset. You will go, Dan, won't you?"

"Oh, yes," said Deronda, carelessly, knowing that Sir Hugo would think any excuse disobliging.

"All meet in the library, then, when they are ready, — say in half an hour," said the baronet. Gwendolen made herself ready with wonderful quickness, and in ten minutes came down into the library in her sables, plume, and little thick boots. As soon as she entered the room she was aware that some one else was there: it was pre-

cisely what she had hoped for. Deronda was standing with his back towards her at the far end of the room, and was looking over a newspaper. How could little thick boots make any noise on an Axminster carpet? And to cough would have seemed an intended signalling which her pride could not condescend to; also, she felt bashful about walking up to him and letting him know that she was there, though it was her hunger to speak to him which had set her imagination on constructing this chance of finding him, and had made her hurry down, as birds hover near the water which they dare not drink. Always uneasily dubious about his opinion of her, she felt a peculiar anxiety to-day, lest he might think of her with contempt, as one triumphantly conscious of being Grandcourt's wife, the future lady of this domain. It was her habitual effort now to magnify the satisfactions of her pride, on which she nourished her strength; but somehow Deronda's being there disturbed them all. There was not the faintest touch of coquetry in the attitude of her mind towards him: he was unique to her among men, because he had impressed her as being not her admirer but her superior: in some mysterious way he was becoming a part of her conscience, as one woman whose nature is an object of reverential belief may become a new conscience to a man.

And now he would not look round and find out that she was there! The paper crackled in his hand, his head rose and sank, exploring those stupid columns, and he was evidently stroking his beard, as if this world were a very easy affair to her. Of course all the rest of the com-

pany would soon be down, and the opportunity of her saying something to efface her flippancy of the evening before, would be quite gone. She felt sick with irritation, — so fast do young creatures like her absorb misery through invisible suckers of their own fancies, — and her face had gathered that peculiar expression which comes with a mortification to which tears are forbidden.

At last he threw down the paper and turned round.

"Oh, you are there already," he said, coming forward a step or two; "I must go and put on my coat."

He turned aside and walked out of the room. This was behaving quite badly. Mere politeness would have made him stay to exchange some words before leaving her alone. It was true that Grandcourt came in with Sir Hugo immediately after, so that the words must have been too few to be worth anything. As it was, they saw him walking from the library door.

"A — you look rather ill," said Grandcourt, going straight up to her, standing in front of her, and looking into her eyes. "Do you feel equal to the walk?"

"Yes, I shall like it," said Gwendolen, without the slightest movement except this of the lips.

"We could put off going over the house, you know, and only go out of doors," said Sir Hugo kindly, while Grandcourt turned aside.

"Oh dear, no!" said Gwendolen, speaking with determination; "let us put off nothing. I want a long walk."

The rest of the walking party — two ladies and two gentlemen besides Deronda — had now assembled; and Gwendolen, rallying, went with due cheerfulness by the side of Sir Hugo, paying apparently an equal attention to the commentaries Deronda was called upon to give on the various architectural fragments, and to Sir Hugo's reasons for not attempting to remedy the mixture of the undisguised modern with the antique, — which in his opinion only made the place the more truly historical. On their way to the buttery and kitchen they took the outside of the house, and paused before a beautiful pointed doorway, which was the only remnant in the east front.

"Well, now, to my mind," said Sir Hugo, "that is more interesting standing as it is in the middle of what is frankly four centuries later, than if the whole front had been dressed up in a pretence of the thirteenth century. Additions ought to smack of the time when they are made, and carry the stamp of their period. I would n't destroy any old bits, but that notion of reproducing the old is a mistake, I think. At least, if a man likes to do it he must pay for his whistle. Besides, where are you to stop along that road, — making loopholes where you don't want to peep, and so on? You may as well ask me to wear out the stones with kneeling; eh, Grandcourt?"

"A confounded nuisance," drawled Grandcourt. "I hate fellows wanting to howl litanies, — acting the greatest bores that have ever existed."

"Well, yes, that 's what their romanticism

must come to," said Sir Hugo, in a tone of confidential assent, — "that is, if they carry it out logically."

"I think that way of arguing against a course because it may be ridden down to an absurdity would soon bring life to a standstill," said Deronda. "It is not the logic of human action, but of a roasting-jack, that must go on to the last turn when it has been once wound up. We can do nothing safely without some judgment as to where we are to stop."

"I find the rule of the pocket the best guide," said Sir Hugo, laughingly. "And as for most of your new-old building, you had need to hire men to scratch and chip it all over artistically to give it an elderly-looking surface; which at the present rate of labour would not answer."

"Do you want to keep up the old fashions, then, Mr. Deronda?" said Gwendolen, taking advantage of the freedom of grouping to fall back a little, while Sir Hugo and Grandcourt went on.

"Some of them. I don't see why we should not use our choice there as we do elsewhere, — or why either age or novelty by itself is an argument for or against. To delight in doing things because our fathers did them is good if it shuts out nothing better; it enlarges the range of affection, and affection is the broadest basis of good in life."

"Do you think so?" said Gwendolen, with a little surprise. "I should have thought you cared most about ideas, knowledge, wisdom, and all that."

"But to care about *them* is a sort of affec-

tion," said Deronda, smiling at her sudden *naïveté*. "Call it attachment, interest, willingness to bear a great deal for the sake of being with them and saving them from injury. Of course it makes a difference if the objects of interest are human beings; but generally in all deep affections the objects are a mixture — half persons and half ideas — sentiments and affections flow in together."

"I wonder whether I understand that," said Gwendolen, putting up her chin in her old saucy manner. "I believe I am not very affectionate; perhaps you mean to tell me that is the reason why I don't see much good in life."

"No, I did *not* mean to tell you that; but I admit that I should think it true if I believed what you say of yourself," said Deronda, gravely.

Here Sir Hugo and Grandcourt turned round and paused.

"I never can get Mr. Deronda to pay me a compliment," said Gwendolen. "I have quite a curiosity to see whether a little flattery can be extracted from him."

"Ah!" said Sir Hugo, glancing at Deronda, "the fact is, it is hopeless to flatter a bride. We give it up in despair. She has been so fed on sweet speeches that everything we say seems tasteless."

"Quite true," said Gwendolen, bending her head and smiling. "Mr. Grandcourt won me by neatly turned compliments. If there had been one word out of place, it would have been fatal."

"Do you hear that?" said Sir Hugo, looking at the husband.

"Yes," said Grandcourt, without change of countenance. "It is a deucedly hard thing to keep up, though."

All this seemed to Sir Hugo a natural playfulness between such a husband and wife; but Deronda wondered at the misleading alternations in Gwendolen's manner, which at one moment seemed to invite sympathy by childlike indiscretion, at another to repel it by proud concealment. He tried to keep out of her way by devoting himself to Miss Juliet Fenn, a young lady whose profile had been so unfavourably decided by circumstances over which she had no control, that Gwendolen some months ago had felt it impossible to be jealous of her. Nevertheless when they were seeing the kitchen — a part of the original building in perfect preservation — the depth of shadow in the niches of the stone walls and groined vault, the play of light from the huge glowing fire on polished tin, brass, and copper, the fine resonance that came with every sound of voice or metal, were all spoiled for Gwendolen, and Sir Hugo's speech about them was made rather importunate, because Deronda was discoursing to the other ladies and kept at a distance from her. It did not signify that the other gentlemen took the opportunity of being near her: of what use in the world was their admiration while she had an uneasy sense that there was some standard in Deronda's mind which measured her into littleness? Mr. Vandernoodt, who had the mania of always describing one thing while you were

looking at another, was quite intolerable with his insistence on Lord Blough's kitchen, which he had seen in the north.

"Pray don't ask us to see two kitchens at once. It makes the heat double. I must really go out of it," she cried at last, marching resolutely into the open air, and leaving the others in the rear. Grandcourt was already out, and as she joined him, he said, —

"I wondered how long you meant to stay in that damned place," — one of the freedoms he had assumed as a husband being the use of his strongest epithets. Gwendolen, turning to see the rest of the party approach, said, —

"It was certainly rather too warm in one's wraps."

They walked on the gravel across a green court, where the snow still lay in islets on the grass, and in masses on the boughs of the great cedar and the crenelated coping of the stone walls, and then into a larger court, where there was another cedar, to find the beautiful choir long ago turned into stables, in the first instance perhaps after an impromptu fashion by troopers, who had a pious satisfaction in insulting the priests of Baal and the images of Ashtoreth, the queen of heaven. The exterior — its west end, save for the stable door, walled in with brick and covered with ivy — was much defaced, maimed of finial and gurgoyle, the friable limestone broken and fretted, and lending its soft gray to a powdery dark lichen; the long windows, too, were filled in with brick as far as the springing of the arches, the broad clerestory windows with wire or ventilating blinds. With

the low wintry afternoon sun upon it, sending shadows from the cedar boughs, and lighting up the touches of snow remaining on every ledge, it had still a scarcely disturbed aspect of antique solemnity, which gave the scene in the interior rather a startling effect; though, ecclesiastical or reverential indignation apart, the eyes could hardly help dwelling with pleasure on its piquant picturesqueness. Each finely arched chapel was turned into a stall, where in the dusty glazing of the windows there still gleamed patches of crimson, orange, blue, and palest violet; for the rest, the choir had been gutted, the floor levelled, paved, and drained according to the most approved fashion, and a line of loose-boxes erected in the middle: a soft light fell from the upper windows on sleek brown or gray flanks and haunches; on mild equine faces looking out with active nostrils over the varnished brown boarding; on the hay hanging from racks where the saints once looked down from the altar-pieces, and on the pale golden straw scattered or in heaps; on a little white-and-liver-coloured spaniel making his bed on the back of an elderly hackney, and on four ancient angels, still showing signs of devotion like mutilated martyrs, — while over all, the grand pointed roof, untouched by reforming wash, showed its lines and colours mysteriously through veiling shadow and cobweb, and a hoof now and then striking against the boards seemed to fill the vault with thunder, while outside there was the answering bay of the blood-hounds.

"Oh, this is glorious!" Gwendolen burst

forth, in forgetfulness of everything but the immediate impression: there had been a little intoxication for her in the grand spaces of courts and building, and the fact of her being an important person among them. "This *is* glorious! Only I wish there were a horse in every one of the boxes. I would ten times rather have these stables than those at Diplow."

But she had no sooner said this than some consciousness arrested her, and involuntarily she turned her eyes towards Deronda, who oddly enough had taken off his felt hat and stood holding it before him as if they had entered a room or an actual church. He, like others, happened to be looking at her, and their eyes met — to her intense vexation, for it seemed to her that by looking at him she had betrayed the reverence of her thoughts, and she felt herself blushing: she exaggerated the impression that even Sir Hugo as well as Deronda would have of her bad taste in referring to the possession of anything at the Abbey: as for Deronda, she had probably made him despise her. Her annoyance at what she imagined to be the obviousness of her confusion robbed her of her usual facility in carrying it off by playful speech, and turning up her face to look at the roof, she wheeled away in that attitude. If any had noticed her blush as significant, they had certainly not interpreted it by the secret windings and recesses of her feeling. A blush is no language: only a dubious flag-signal, which may mean either of two contradictories. Deronda alone had a faint guess at some part of her feeling; but while he was observing her he was himself under observation.

"Do you take off your hat to the horses?" said Grandcourt, with a slight sneer.

"Why not?" said Deronda, covering himself. He had really taken off the hat automatically, and if he had been an ugly man might doubtless have done so with impunity: ugliness having naturally the air of involuntary exposure, and beauty, of display.

Gwendolen's confusion was soon merged in the survey of the horses, which Grandcourt politely abstained from appraising, languidly assenting to Sir Hugo's alternate depreciation and eulogy of the same animal, as one that he should not have bought when he was younger and piqued himself on his horses, but yet one that had better qualities than many more expensive brutes.

"The fact is, stables dive deeper and deeper into the pocket nowadays, and I am very glad to have got rid of that *démangeaison*," said Sir Hugo, as they were coming out.

"What is a man to do, though?" said Grandcourt. "He must ride. I don't see what else there is to do. And I don't call it riding to sit astride a set of brutes with every deformity under the sun."

This delicate diplomatic way of characterizing Sir Hugo's stud did not require direct notice; and the baronet, feeling that the conversation had worn rather thin, said to the party generally, "Now we are going to see the cloister — the finest bit of all — in perfect preservation: the monks might have been walking there yesterday."

But Gwendolen had lingered behind to look

at the kennelled blood-hounds, perhaps because she felt a little dispirited; and Grandcourt waited for her.

"You had better take my arm," he said, in his low tone of command; and she took it.

"It 's a great bore being dragged about in this way, and no cigar," said Grandcourt.

"I thought you would like it."

"Like it! — one eternal chatter. And encouraging those ugly girls — inviting one to meet such monsters. How that *fat* Deronda can bear looking at her — "

"Why do you call him a *fat?* Do you object to him so much?"

"Object? no. What do I care about his being a *fat?* It 's of no consequence to me. I 'll invite him to Diplow again if you like."

"I don't think he would come. He is too clever and learned to care about *us,*" said Gwendolen, thinking it useful for her husband to be told (privately) that it was possible for him to be looked down upon.

"I never saw that make much difference in a man. Either he is a gentleman or he is not," said Grandcourt.

That a new husband and wife should snatch a moment's *tête-à-tête* was what could be understood and indulged; and the rest of the party left them in the rear till, re-entering the garden, they all paused in that cloistered court where, among the falling rose-petals thirteen years before, we saw a boy becoming acquainted with his first sorrow. This cloister was built of harder stone than the church, and had been in greater safety from the wearing weather. It was a rare

example of a northern cloister with arched and pillared openings not intended for glazing, and the delicately wrought foliage of the capitals seemed still to carry the very touches of the chisel. Gwendolen had dropped her husband's arm and joined the other ladies, to whom Deronda was noticing the delicate sense which had combined freedom with accuracy in the imitation of natural forms.

"I wonder whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through the real objects," he said, after pointing out a lovely capital made by the curled leaves of greens, showing their reticulated under-side with the firm gradual swell of its central rib. "When I was a little fellow these capitals taught me to observe, and delight in, the structure of leaves."

"I suppose you can see every line of them with your eyes shut," said Juliet Fenn.

"Yes. I was always repeating them, because for a good many years this court stood for me as my only image of a convent, and whenever I read of monks and monasteries, this was my scenery for them."

"You must love this place very much," said Miss Fenn, innocently, not thinking of inheritance. "So many homes are like twenty others. But this is unique, and you seem to know every cranny of it. I dare say you could never love another home so well."

"Oh, I carry it with me," said Deronda, quietly, being used to all possible thoughts of this kind. "To most men their early home is no more than a memory of their early years,

and I 'm not sure but they have the best of it. The image is never marred. There 's no disappointment in memory, and one's exaggerations are always on the good side."

Gwendolen felt sure that he spoke in that way out of delicacy to her and Grandcourt — because he knew they must hear him; and that he probably thought of her as a selfish creature who only cared about possessing things in her own person. But whatever he might say, it must have been a secret hardship to him that any circumstances of his birth had shut him out from the inheritance of his father's position; and if he supposed that she exulted in her husband's taking it, what could he feel for her but scornful pity? Indeed it seemed clear to her that he was avoiding her, and preferred talking to others — which nevertheless was not kind in him.

With these thoughts in her mind she was prevented by a mixture of pride and timidity from addressing him again, and when they were looking at the rows of quaint portraits in the gallery above the cloisters, she kept up her air of interest and made her vivacious remarks without any direct appeal to Deronda. But at the end she was very weary of her assumed spirits, and as Grandcourt turned into the billiard-room, she went to the pretty boudoir which had been assigned to her, and shut herself up to look melancholy at her ease. No chemical process shows a more wonderful activity than the transforming influence of the thoughts we imagine to be going on in another. Changes in theory, religion, admirations, may begin with a sus-

picion of dissent or disapproval, even when the grounds of disapproval are but matter of searching conjecture.

Poor Gwendolen was conscious of an uneasy, transforming process, — all the old nature shaken to its depths, its hopes spoiled, its pleasures perturbed, but still showing wholeness and strength in the will to reassert itself. After every new shock of humiliation she tried to adjust herself and seize her old supports, — proud concealment, trust in new excitements that would make life go by without much thinking; trust in some deed of reparation to nullify her self-blame and shield her from a vague, ever-visiting dread of some horrible calamity; trust in the hardening effect of use and wont that would make her indifferent to her miseries.

Yes, — miseries. This beautiful, healthy young creature, with her two-and-twenty years and her gratified ambition, no longer felt inclined to kiss her fortunate image in the glass; she looked at it with wonder that she could be so miserable. One belief which had accompanied her through her unmarried life as a self-cajoling superstition, encouraged by the subordination of every one about her — the belief in her own power of dominating — was utterly gone. Already, in seven short weeks, which seemed half her life, her husband had gained a mastery which she could no more resist than she could have resisted the benumbing effect from the touch of a torpedo. Gwendolen's will had seemed imperious in its small girlish sway; but it was the will of a creature with a large discourse of imaginative fears: a shadow would

have been enough to relax its hold. And she had found a will like that of a crab or a boa-constrictor which goes on pinching or crushing without alarm at thunder. Not that Grandcourt was without calculation of the intangible effects which were the chief means of mastery; indeed he had a surprising acuteness in detecting that situation of feeling in Gwendolen which made her proud and rebellious spirit dumb and helpless before him.

She had burnt Lydia Glasher's letter with an instantaneous terror lest other eyes should see it, and had tenaciously concealed from Grandcourt that there was any other cause of her violent hysterics than the excitement and fatigue of the day: she had been urged into an implied falsehood. "Don't ask me — it was my feeling about everything — it was the sudden change from home." The words of that letter kept repeating themselves, and hung on her consciousness with the weight of a prophetic doom. "I am the grave in which your chance of happiness is buried as well as mine. You had your warning. You have chosen to injure me and my children. He had meant to marry me. He would have married me at last, if you had not broken your word. You will have your punishment. I desire it with all my soul. Will you give him this letter to set him against me and ruin us more, — me and my children? Shall you like to stand before your husband with these diamonds on you, and these words of mine in his thoughts and yours? Will he think you have any right to complain when he has made you miserable? You took him with your eyes open.

The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse."

The words had nestled their venomous life within her, and stirred continually the vision of the scene at the Whispering Stones. That scene was now like an accusing apparition: she dreaded that Grandcourt should know of it, — so far out of her sight now was that possibility she had once satisfied herself with, of speaking to him about Mrs. Glasher and her children, and making them rich amends. Any endurance seemed easier than the mortal humiliation of confessing that she knew all before she married him, and in marrying him had broken her word. For the reasons by which she had justified herself when the marriage tempted her, and all her easy arrangement of her future power over her husband to make him do better than he might be inclined to do were now as futile as the burnt-out lights which set off a child's pageant. Her sense of being blameworthy was exaggerated by a dread both definite and vague. The definite dread was lest the veil of secrecy should fall between her and Grandcourt, and give him the right to taunt her. With the reading of that letter had begun her husband's empire of fear.

And her husband all the while knew it. He had not, indeed, any distinct knowledge of her broken promise, and would not have rated highly the effect of that breach on her conscience; but he was aware not only of what Lush had told him about the meeting at the Whispering Stones, but also of Gwendolen's concealment as to the cause of her sudden illness. He felt sure that Lydia had enclosed something with

the diamonds, and that this something, whatever it was, had at once created in Gwendolen a new repulsion for him and a reason for not daring to manifest it. He did not greatly mind, or feel as many men might have felt, that his hopes in marriage were blighted: he had wanted to marry Gwendolen, and he was not a man to repent. Why should a gentleman whose other relations in life are carried on without the luxury of sympathetic feeling, be supposed to require that kind of condiment in domestic life? What he chiefly felt was that a change had come over the conditions of his mastery, which, far from shaking it, might establish it the more thoroughly. And it was established. He judged that he had not married a simpleton unable to perceive the impossibility of escape, or to see alternative evils: he had married a girl who had spirit and pride enough not to make a fool of herself by forfeiting all the advantages of a position which had attracted her; and if she wanted pregnant hints to help her in making up her mind properly, he would take care not to withhold them.

Gwendolen, indeed, with all that gnawing trouble in her consciousness, had hardly for a moment dropped the sense that it was her part to bear herself with dignity, and appear what is called happy. In disclosure of disappointment or sorrow she saw nothing but a humiliation which would have been vinegar to her wounds. Whatever her husband might come at last to be to her, she meant to wear the yoke so as not to be pitied. For she did think of the coming years with presentiment: she was fright-

ened at Grandcourt. The poor thing had passed from her girlish sauciness of superiority over this inert specimen of personal distinction into an amazed perception of her former ignorance about the possible mental attitude of a man towards the woman he sought in marriage, — of her present ignorance as to what their life with each other might turn into. For novelty gives immeasurableness to fear, and fills the early time of all sad changes with phantoms of the future. Her little coquetries, voluntary or involuntary, had told on Grandcourt during courtship, and formed a medium of communication between them, showing him in the light of a creature such as she could understand and manage: but marriage had nullified all such interchange, and Grandcourt had become a blank uncertainty to her in everything but this, that he would do just what he willed, and that she had neither devices at her command to determine his will, nor any rational means of escaping it.

What had occurred between them about her wearing the diamonds was typical. One evening, shortly before they came to the Abbey, they were going to dine at Brackenshaw Castle. Gwendolen had said to herself that she would never wear those diamonds: they had horrible words clinging and crawling about them, as from some bad dream, whose images lingered on the perturbed sense. She came down dressed in her white, with only a streak of gold and a pendant of emeralds, which Grandcourt had given her, round her neck, and little emerald stars in her ears.

Grandcourt stood with his back to the fire and looked at her as she entered.

"Am I altogether as you like?" she said, speaking rather gayly. She was not without enjoyment in this occasion of going to Brackenshaw Castle with her new dignities upon her, as men whose affairs are sadly involved will enjoy dining out among persons likely to be under a pleasant mistake about them.

"No," said Grandcourt.

Gwendolen felt suddenly uncomfortable, wondering what was to come. She was not unprepared for some struggle about the diamonds; but suppose he were going to say, in low contemptuous tones, "You are not in any way what I like." It was very bad for her to be secretly hating him; but it would be much worse when he gave the first sign of hating her.

"Oh, mercy!" she exclaimed, the pause lasting till she could bear it no longer. "How am I to alter myself?"

"Put on the diamonds," said Grandcourt, looking straight at her with his narrow glance.

Gwendolen paused in her turn, afraid of showing any emotion, and feeling that nevertheless there was some change in her eyes as they met his. But she was obliged to answer, and said as indifferently as she could, "Oh, please not. I don't think diamonds suit me."

"What you think has nothing to do with it," said Grandcourt, his *sotto-voce* imperiousness seeming to have an evening quietude and finish, like his toilet. "I wish you to wear the diamonds."

"Pray excuse me; I like these emeralds," said

Gwendolen, frightened in spite of her preparation. That white hand of his which was touching his whisker was capable, she fancied, of clinging round her neck and threatening to throttle her; for her fear of him, mingling with the vague foreboding of some retributive calamity which hung about her life, had reached a superstitious point.

" Oblige me by telling me your reason for not wearing the diamonds when I desire it," said Grandcourt. His eyes were still fixed upon her, and she felt her own eyes narrowing under them as if to shut out an entering pain.

Of what use was the rebellion within her? She could say nothing that would not hurt her worse than submission. Turning slowly and covering herself again, she went to her dressing-room. As she reached out the diamonds, it occurred to her that her unwillingness to wear them might have already raised a suspicion in Grandcourt that she had some knowledge about them which he had not given her. She fancied that his eyes showed a delight in torturing her. How could she be defiant? She had nothing to say that would touch him, — nothing but what would give him a more painful grasp on her consciousness.

" He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his," she said to herself, as she opened the jewel-case with a shivering sensation. " It will come to be so with me; and I shall quail. What else is there for me? I will not say to the world, ' Pity me.' "

She was about to ring for her maid when she

heard the door open behind her. It was Grandcourt who came in.

"You want some one to fasten them," he said, coming towards her.

She did not answer, but simply stood still, leaving him to take out the ornaments and fasten them as he would. Doubtless he had been used to fasten them on some one else. With a bitter sort of sarcasm against herself, Gwendolen thought, "What a privilege this is, to have robbed another woman of!"

"What makes you so cold?" said Grandcourt, when he had fastened the last earring. "Pray put plenty of furs on. I hate to see a woman come into a room looking frozen. If you are to appear as a bride at all, appear decently."

This marital speech was not exactly persuasive, but it touched the quick of Gwendolen's pride and forced her to rally. The words of the bad dream crawled about the diamonds still, but only for her: to others they were brilliants that suited her perfectly, and Grandcourt inwardly observed that she answered to the rein.

"Oh, yes, mamma, quite happy," Gwendolen had said on her return to Diplow. "Not at all disappointed in Ryelands. It is a much finer place than this, larger in every way. But don't you want some more money?"

"Did you not know that Mr. Grandcourt left me a letter on your wedding-day? I am to have eight hundred a-year. He wishes me to keep Offendene for the present, while you are at Diplow. But if there were some pretty cottage near the park at Ryelands, we might live there

without much expense, and I should have you most of the year, perhaps."

"We must leave that to Mr. Grandcourt, mamma."

"Oh, certainly. It is exceedingly handsome of him to say that he will pay the rent for Offendene till June. And we can go on very well, — without any man-servant except Crane, just for out of doors. Our good Merry will stay with us and help me to manage everything. It is natural that Mr. Grandcourt should wish me to live in a good style of house in your neighbourhood, and I cannot decline. So he said nothing about it to you?"

"No; he wished me to hear it from you, I suppose."

Gwendolen, in fact, had been very anxious to have some definite knowledge of what would be done for her mother, but at no moment since her marriage had she been able to overcome the difficulty of mentioning the subject to Grandcourt. Now, however, she had a sense of obligation which would not let her rest without saying to him, "It is very good of you to provide for mamma. You took a great deal on yourself in marrying a girl who had nothing but relations belonging to her."

Grandcourt was smoking, and only said carelessly, "Of course I was not going to let her live like a gamekeeper's mother."

"At least he is not mean about money," thought Gwendolen, "and mamma is the better off for my marriage."

She often pursued the comparison between what might have been, if she had not married

Grandcourt, and what actually was, trying to persuade herself that life generally was barren of satisfaction, and that if she had chosen differently she might now have been looking back with a regret as bitter as the feeling she was trying to argue away. Her mother's dulness, which used to irritate her, she was at present inclined to explain as the ordinary result of women's experience. True, she still saw that she would "manage differently from mamma;" but her management now only meant that she would carry her troubles with spirit, and let none suspect them. By and by she promised herself that she should get used to her heart-sores, and find excitements that would carry her through life, as a hard gallop carried her through some of the morning hours. There was gambling: she had heard stories at Leubronn of fashionable women who gambled in all sorts of ways. It seemed very flat to her at this distance; but perhaps if she began to gamble again, the passion might awake. Then there was the pleasure of producing an effect by her appearance in society: what did celebrated beauties do in town when their husbands could afford display? All men were fascinated by them; they had a perfect equipage and toilet, walked into public places, and bowed, and made the usual answers, and walked out again: perhaps they bought china, and practised accomplishments. If she could only feel a keen appetite for those pleasures, — could only believe in pleasure as she used to do! Accomplishments had ceased to have the exciting quality of promising any pre-eminence to her; and as

for fascinated gentlemen, — adorers who might hover round her with languishment, and diversify married life with the romantic stir of mystery, passion, and danger which her French reading had given her some girlish notion of, — they presented themselves to her imagination with the fatal circumstance that, instead of fascinating her in return, they were clad in her own weariness and disgust. The admiring male, rashly adjusting the expression of his features and the turn of his conversation to her supposed tastes, had always been an absurd object to her, and at present seemed rather detestable. Many courses are actually pursued, — follies and sins both convenient and inconvenient, — without pleasure or hope of pleasure; but to solace ourselves with imagining any course beforehand, there must be some foretaste of pleasure in the shape of appetite; and Gwendolen's appetite had sickened. Let her wander over the possibilities of her life as she would, an uncertain shadow dogged her. Her confidence in herself and her destiny had turned into remorse and dread; she trusted neither herself nor her future.

This hidden helplessness gave fresh force to the hold Deronda had from the first taken on her mind, as one who had an unknown standard by which he judged her. Had he some way of looking at things which might be a new footing for her, — an inward safeguard against possible events which she dreaded as stored-up retribution? It is one of the secrets in that change of mental poise which has been fitly named conversion, that to many among us neither heaven

nor earth has any revelation till some personality touches theirs with a peculiar influence, subduing them into receptiveness. It had been Gwendolen's habit to think of the persons around her as stale books, too familiar to be interesting. Deronda had lit up her attention with a sense of novelty: not by words only, but by imagined facts, his influence had entered into the current of that self-suspicion and self-blame which awakens a new consciousness.

"I wish he could know everything about me without my telling him," was one of her thoughts, as she sat leaning over the end of a couch, supporting her head with her hand, and looking at herself in a mirror, — not in admiration, but in a sad kind of companionship. "I wish he knew that I am not so contemptible as he thinks me, that I am in deep trouble, and want to be something better if I could." Without the aid of sacred ceremony or costume, her feelings had turned this man, only a few years older than herself, into a priest; a sort of trust less rare than the fidelity that guards it. Young reverence for one who is also young is the most coercive of all: there is the same level of temptation, and the higher motive is believed in as a fuller force, — not suspected to be a mere residue from weary experience.

But the coercion is often stronger on the one who takes the reverence. Those who trust us educate us. And perhaps in that ideal consecration of Gwendolen's, some education was being prepared for Deronda.

CHAPTER II

Rien ne pèse tant qu'un secret,
Le porter loin est difficile aux dames:
Et je sçais mesme sur ce fait
Bon nombre d'hommes qui sont femmes.

La Fontaine.

MEANWHILE Deronda had been fastened and led off by Mr. Vandernoodt, who wished for a brisker walk, a cigar, and a little gossip. Since we cannot tell a man his own secrets, the restraint of being in his company often breeds a desire to pair off in conversation with some more ignorant person; and Mr. Vandernoodt presently said, —

"What a washed-out piece of cambric Grandcourt is! But if he is a favourite of yours, I withdraw the remark."

"Not the least in the world," said Deronda.

"I thought not. One wonders how he came to have a great passion again; and he must have had, — to marry in this way. Though Lush, his old chum, hints that he married this girl out of obstinacy. By George! it was a very accountable obstinacy. A man might make up his mind to marry her without the stimulus of contradiction. But he must have made himself a pretty large drain of money, eh?"

"I know nothing of his affairs."

"What! not of the other establishment he keeps up?"

"Diplow? Of course. He took that of Sir Hugo. But merely for the year."

"No, no: not Diplow: Gadsmere. Sir Hugo knows, I 'll answer for it."

Deronda said nothing. He really began to feel some curiosity, but he foresaw that he should hear what Mr. Vandernoodt had to tell, without the condescension of asking.

"Lush would not altogether own to it, of course. He 's a confidant and go-between of Grandcourt's. But I have it on the best authority. The fact is, there 's another lady with four children at Gadsmere. She has had the upper hand of him these ten years and more, and by what I can understand has it still, — left her husband for him, and used to travel with him everywhere. Her husband 's dead now: I found a fellow who was in the same regiment with him, and knew this Mrs. Glasher before she took wing. A fiery dark-eyed woman, — a noted beauty at that time, — he thought she was dead. They say she has Grandcourt under her thumb still, and it 's a wonder he did n't marry her, for there 's a very fine boy, and I understand Grandcourt can do absolutely as he pleases with the estates. Lush told me as much as that."

"What right had he to marry this girl?" said Deronda, with disgust.

Mr. Vandernoodt, adjusting the end of his cigar, shrugged his shoulders and put out his lips.

"*She* can know nothing of it," said Deronda, emphatically. But that positive statement was immediately followed by an inward query, — "Could she have known anything of it?"

"It 's rather a piquant picture," said Mr. Vandernoodt, — "Grandcourt between two fiery

women. For, depend upon it, this light-haired one has plenty of devil in her. I formed that opinion of her at Leubronn. It 's a sort of Medea and Creüsa business. Fancy the two meeting! Grandcourt is a new kind of Jason: I wonder what sort of a part he 'll make of it. It 's a dog's part at best. I think I hear Ristori now, saying ' Jasone! Jasone! ' These fine women generally get hold of a stick."

" Grandcourt can bite, I fancy," said Deronda. " He is no stick."

" No, no; I meant Jason. I can't quite make out Grandcourt. But he 's a keen fellow enough, — uncommonly well built too. And if he comes into all this property, the estates will bear dividing. This girl, whose friends had come to beggary, I understand, may think herself lucky to get him. I don't want to be hard on a man because he gets involved in an affair of that sort. But he might make himself more agreeable. I was telling him a capital story last night, and he got up and walked away in the middle. I felt inclined to kick him. Do you suppose that is inattention or insolence, now? "

" Oh, a mixture. He generally observes the forms; but he does n't listen much," said Deronda. Then, after a moment's pause, he went on, " I should think there must be some exaggeration or inaccuracy in what you have heard about this lady at Gadsmere."

" Not a bit, depend upon it; it has all lain snug of late years. People have forgotten all about it. But there the nest is, and the birds are in it. And I know Grandcourt goes there. I have good evidence that he goes there. How-

ever, that 's nobody's business but his own. The affair has sunk below the surface."

"I wonder you could have learned so much about it," said Deronda, rather dryly.

"Oh, there are plenty of people who knew all about it; but such stories get packed away like old letters. They interest me. I like to know the manners of my time, — contemporary gossip, not antediluvian. These Dryasdust fellows get a reputation by raking up some small scandal about Semiramis or Nitocris, and then we have a thousand and one poems written upon it by all the warblers big and little. But I don't care a straw about the *faux pas* of the mummies. You do, though. You are one of the historical men, — more interested in a lady when she 's got a rag face and skeleton toes peeping out. Does that flatter your imagination?"

"Well, if she had any woes in her love, one has the satisfaction of knowing that she 's well out of them."

"Ah, you are thinking of the Medea, I see."

Deronda then chose to point to some giant oaks worth looking at in their bareness. He also felt an interest in this piece of contemporary gossip, but he was satisfied that Mr. Vandernoodt had no more to tell about it.

Since the early days when he tried to construct the hidden story of his own birth, his mind had perhaps never been so active in weaving probabilities about any private affair as it had now begun to be about Gwendolen's marriage. This unavowed relation of Grandcourt's, — could she have gained some knowledge of it, which caused her to shrink from the match, — a shrinking

finally overcome by the urgence of poverty? He could recall almost every word she had said to him, and in certain of these words he seemed to discern that she was conscious of having done some wrong, — inflicted some injury. His own acute experience made him alive to the form of injury which might affect the unavowed children and their mother. Was Mrs. Grandcourt, under all her determined show of satisfaction, gnawed by a double, a treble-headed grief, — self-reproach, disappointment, jealousy? He dwelt especially on all the slight signs of self-reproach: he was inclined to judge her tenderly, to excuse, to pity. He thought he had found a key now by which to interpret her more clearly: what magnifying of her misery might not a young creature get into who had wedded her fresh hopes to old secrets! He thought he saw clearly enough now why Sir Hugo had never dropped any hint of this affair to him; and immediately the image of this Mrs. Glasher became painfully associated with his own hidden birth. Gwendolen knowing of that woman and her children, marrying Grandcourt, and showing herself contented, would have been among the most repulsive of beings to him; but Gwendolen tasting the bitterness of remorse for having contributed to their injury was brought very near to his fellow-feeling. If it were so, she had got to a common plane of understanding with him on some difficulties of life which a woman is rarely able to judge of with any justice or generosity; for, according to precedent, Gwendolen's view of her position might easily have been no other than that her husband's marriage with her was his

entrance on the path of virtue, while Mrs. Glasher represented his forsaken sin. And Deronda had naturally some resentment on behalf of the Hagars and Ishmaels.

Undeniably Deronda's growing solicitude about Gwendolen depended chiefly on her peculiar manner towards him; and I suppose neither man nor woman would be the better for an utter insensibility to such appeals. One sign that his interest in her had changed its footing was that he dismissed any caution against her being a coquette setting snares to involve him in a vulgar flirtation, and determined that he would not again evade any opportunity of talking with her. He had shaken off Mr. Vandernoodt, and got into a solitary corner in the twilight; but half an hour was long enough to think of those possibilities in Gwendolen's position and state of mind, and on forming the determination not to avoid her, he remembered that she was likely to be at tea with the other ladies in the drawing-room. The conjecture was true; for Gwendolen, after resolving not to go down again for the next four hours, began to feel, at the end of one, that in shutting herself up she missed all chances of seeing and hearing, and that her visit would only last two days more. She adjusted herself, put on her little air of self-possession, and going down, made herself resolutely agreeable. Only ladies were assembled, and Lady Pentreath was amusing them with a description of a drawing-room under the Regency, and the figure that was cut by ladies and gentlemen in 1819, the year she was presented — when Deronda entered.

"Shall I be acceptable?" he said. "Perhaps

I had better go back and look for the others. I suppose they are in the billiard-room."

"No, no; stay where you are," said Lady Pentreath. "They were all getting tired of me; let us hear what *you* have to say."

"That is rather an embarrassing appeal," said Deronda, drawing up a chair near Lady Mallinger's elbow at the tea-table. "I think I had better take the opportunity of mentioning our songstress," he added, looking at Lady Mallinger, — "unless you have done so."

"Oh, the little Jewess!" said Lady Mallinger. "No, I have not mentioned her. It never entered my head that any one here wanted singing-lessons."

"All ladies know some one else who wants singing-lessons," said Deronda. "I have happened to find an exquisite singer;" here he turned to Lady Pentreath. "She is living with some ladies who are friends of mine, — the mother and sisters of a man who was my chum at Cambridge. She was on the stage at Vienna; but she wants to leave that life, and maintain herself by teaching."

"There are swarms of those people, are n't there?" said the old lady. "Are her lessons to be very cheap or very expensive? Those are the two baits I know of."

"There is another bait for those who hear her," said Deronda. "Her singing is something quite exceptional, I think. She has had such first-rate teaching, — or rather first-rate instinct with her teaching, — that you might imagine her singing all came by nature."

"Why did she leave the stage, then?" said

Lady Pentreath. "I 'm too old to believe in first-rate people giving up first-rate chances."

"Her voice was too weak. It is a delicious voice for a room. You who put up with my singing of Schubert would be enchanted with hers," said Deronda, looking at Mrs. Raymond. "And I imagine she would not object to sing at private parties or concerts. Her voice is quite equal to that."

"I am to have her in my drawing-room when we go up to town," said Lady Mallinger. "You shall hear her then. I have not heard her myself yet; but I trust Daniel's recommendation. I mean my girls to have lessons of her."

"Is it a charitable affair?" said Lady Pentreath. "I can't bear charitable music."

Lady Mallinger, who was rather helpless in conversation, and felt herself under an engagement not to tell anything of Mirah's story, had an embarrassed smile on her face, and glanced at Deronda.

"It is a charity to those who want to have a good model of feminine singing," said Deronda. "I think everybody who has ears would benefit by a little improvement on the ordinary style. If you heard Miss Lapidoth," — here he looked at Gwendolen, — "perhaps you would revoke your resolution to give up singing."

"I should rather think my resolution would be confirmed," said Gwendolen. "I don't feel able to follow your advice of enjoying my own middlingness."

"For my part," said Deronda, "people who do anything finely always inspirit me to try. I don't mean that they make me believe I can do

it as well. But they make the thing, whatever it may be, seem worthy to be done. I can bear to think my own music not good for much, but the world would be more dismal if I thought music itself not good for much. Excellence encourages one about life generally; it shows the spiritual wealth of the world."

"But then if we can't imitate it? — it only makes our own life seem the tamer," said Gwendolen, in a mood to resent encouragement founded on her own insignificance.

"That depends on the point of view, I think," said Deronda. "We should have a poor life of it if we were reduced for all our pleasure to our own performances. A little private imitation of what is good is a sort of private devotion to it, and most of us ought to practise art only in the light of private study, — preparation to understand and enjoy what the few can do for us. I think Miss Lapidoth is one of the few."

"She must be a very happy person, don't you think?" said Gwendolen, with a touch of sarcasm, and a turn of her neck towards Mrs. Raymond.

"I don't know," answered the independent lady; "I must hear more of her before I said that."

"It may have been a bitter disappointment to her that her voice failed her for the stage," said Juliet Fenn, sympathetically.

"I suppose she 's past her best, though," said the deep voice of Lady Pentreath.

"On the contrary, she has not reached it," said Deronda. "She is barely twenty."

"And very pretty," interposed Lady Mal-

linger, with an amiable wish to help Deronda. "And she has very good manners. I 'm sorry she is a bigoted Jewess; I should not like it for anything else, but it does n't matter in singing."

"Well, since her voice is too weak for her to scream much, I 'll tell Lady Clementina to set her on my nine granddaughters," said Lady Pentreath; "and I hope she 'll convince eight of them that they have not voice enough to sing anywhere but at church. My notion is, that many of our girls nowadays want lessons not to sing."

"I have had my lessons in that," said Gwendolen, looking at Deronda. "You see Lady Pentreath is on my side."

While she was speaking, Sir Hugo entered with some of the other gentlemen, including Grandcourt, and standing against the group at the low tea-table said, —

"What imposition is Deronda putting on you ladies, — slipping in among you by himself?"

"Wanting to pass off an obscurity on us as better than any celebrity," said Lady Pentreath, — "a pretty singing Jewess who is to astonish these young people. You and I, who heard Catalani in her prime, are not so easily astonished."

Sir Hugo listened with his good-humoured smile as he took a cup of tea from his wife, and then said, "Well, you know, a Liberal is bound to think that there have been singers since Catalani's time."

"Ah, you are younger than I am. I dare say you are one of the men who ran after Alcharisi. But she married off and left you all in the lurch."

" Yes, yes; it 's rather too bad when these great singers marry themselves into silence before they have a crack in their voices. And the husband is a public robber. I remember Leroux saying, ' A man might as well take down a fine peal of church bells and carry them off to the steppes,' " said Sir Hugo, setting down his cup and turning away, while Deronda, who had moved from his place to make room for others, and felt that he was not in request, sat down a little apart. Presently he became aware that, in the general dispersion of the group, Gwendolen had extricated herself from the attentions of Mr. Vandernoodt and had walked to the piano, where she stood apparently examining the music which lay on the desk. Will any one be surprised at Deronda's concluding that she wished him to join her? Perhaps she wanted to make amends for the unpleasant tone of resistance with which she had met his recommendation of Mirah, for he had noticed that her first impulse often was to say what she afterwards wished to retract. He went to her side and said, —

" Are you relenting about the music and looking for something to play or sing? "

" I am not looking for anything, but I *am* relenting," said Gwendolen, speaking in a submissive tone.

" May I know the reason? "

" I should like to hear Miss Lapidoth and have lessons from her, since you admire her so much, — that is, of course, when we go to town. I mean lessons in rejoicing at her excellence and my own deficiency," said Gwendolen, turning on him a sweet open smile.

"I shall be really glad for you to see and hear her," said Deronda, returning the smile in kind.

"Is she as perfect in everything else as in her music?"

"I can't vouch for that exactly. I have not seen enough of her. But I have seen nothing in her that I could wish to be different. She has had an unhappy life. Her troubles began in early childhood, and she has grown up among very painful surroundings. But I think you will say that no advantages could have given her more grace and truer refinement."

"I wonder what sort of troubles hers were?"

"I have not any very precise knowledge. But I know that she was on the brink of drowning herself in despair."

"And what hindered her?" said Gwendolen, quickly, looking at Deronda.

"Some ray or other came, — which made her feel that she ought to live, — that it was good to live," he answered quietly. "She is full of piety, and seems capable of submitting to anything when it takes the form of duty."

"Those people are not to be pitied," said Gwendolen, impatiently. "I have no sympathy with women who are always doing right. I don't believe in their great sufferings." Her fingers moved quickly among the edges of the music.

"It is true," said Deronda, "that the consciousness of having done wrong is something deeper, more bitter. I suppose we faulty creatures can never feel so much for the irreproachable as for those who are bruised in the struggle

with their own faults. It is a very ancient story, that of the lost sheep, — but it comes up afresh every day."

"That is a way of speaking, — it is not acted on, it is not real," said Gwendolen, bitterly. "You admire Miss Lapidoth because you think her blameless, perfect. And you know you would despise a woman who had done something you thought very wrong."

"That would depend entirely on her own view of what she had done," said Deronda.

"You would be satisfied if she were very wretched, I suppose?" said Gwendolen, impetuously.

"No, not satisfied, — full of sorrow for her. It was not a mere way of speaking. I did not mean to say that the finer nature is not more adorable; I meant that those who would be comparatively uninteresting beforehand may become worthier of sympathy when they do something that awakens in them a keen remorse. Lives are enlarged in different ways. I dare say some would never get their eyes opened if it were not for a violent shock from the consequences of their own actions. And when they are suffering in that way one must care for them more than for the comfortably self-satisfied." Deronda forgot everything but his vision of what Gwendolen's experience had probably been, and urged by compassion let his eyes and voice express as much interest as they would.

Gwendolen had slipped on to the music-stool, and looked up at him with pain in her long eyes, like a wounded animal asking help.

"Are you persuading Mrs. Grandcourt to

play to us, Dan?" said Sir Hugo, coming up and putting his hand on Deronda's shoulder with a gentle admonitory pinch.

"I cannot persuade myself," said Gwendolen, rising.

Others had followed Sir Hugo's lead, and there was an end of any liability to confidences for that day. But the next was New Year's Eve; and a grand dance, to which the chief tenants were invited, was to be held in the picture-gallery above the cloister, — the sort of entertainment in which numbers and general movement may create privacy. When Gwendolen was dressing, she longed, in remembrance of Leubronn, to put on the old turquoise necklace for her sole ornament; but she dared not offend her husband by appearing in that shabby way on an occasion when he would demand her utmost splendour. Determined to wear the memorial necklace somehow, she wound it thrice round her wrist and made a bracelet of it, — having gone to her room to put it on just before the time of entering the ball-room.

It was always a beautiful scene, this dance on New Year's Eve, which had been kept up by family tradition as nearly in the old fashion as inexorable change would allow. Red carpet was laid down for the occasion; hot-house plants and evergreens were arranged in bowers at the extremities and in every recess of the gallery; and the old portraits stretching back through generations even to the pre-portraying period, made a piquant line of spectators. Some neighbouring gentry, major and minor, were invited; and it was certainly an occasion when a pro-

spective master and mistress of Abbot's and King's Topping might see their future glory in an agreeable light, as a picturesque provincial supremacy with a rent-roll personified by the most prosperous-looking tenants. Sir Hugo expected Grandcourt to feel flattered by being asked to the Abbey at a time which included this festival in honour of the family estate; but he also hoped that his own hale appearance might impress his successor with the probable length of time that would elapse before the succession came, and with the wisdom of preferring a good actual sum to a minor property that must be waited for. All present, down to the least important farmer's daughter, knew that they were to see "young Grandcourt," Sir Hugo's nephew, the presumptive heir and future baronet, now visiting the Abbey with his bride after an absence of many years; any coolness between uncle and nephew having, it was understood, given way to a friendly warmth. The bride opening the ball with Sir Hugo was necessarily the cynosure of all eyes; and less than a year before, if some magic mirror could have shown Gwendolen her actual position, she would have imagined herself moving in it with a glow of triumphant pleasure, conscious that she held in her hands a life full of favourable chances which her cleverness and spirit would enable her to make the best of. And now she was wondering that she could get so little joy out of the exaltation to which she had been suddenly lifted, away from the distasteful petty empire of her girlhood with its irksome lack of distinction and superfluity of sisters. She would have been glad

to be even unreasonably elated, and to forget everything but the flattery of the moment; but she was like one courting sleep, in whom thoughts insist like wilful tormentors.

Wondering in this way at her own dulness, and all the while longing for an excitement that would deaden importunate aches, she was passing through files of admiring beholders in the country-dance with which it was traditional to open the ball, and was being generally regarded by her own sex as an enviable woman. It was remarked that she carried herself with a wonderful air, considering that she had been nobody in particular, and without a farthing to her fortune. If she had been a duke's daughter or one of the royal princesses, she could not have taken the honours of the evening more as a matter of course. Poor Gwendolen! It would by and by become a sort of skill in which she was automatically practised, to bear this last great gambling loss with an air of perfect self-possession.

The next couple that passed were also worth looking at. Lady Pentreath had said, "I shall stand up for one dance, but I shall choose my partner. Mr. Deronda, you are the youngest man; I mean to dance with you. Nobody is old enough to make a good pair with me. I must have a contrast." And the contrast certainly set off the old lady to the utmost. She was one of those women who are never handsome till they are old, and she had had the wisdom to embrace the beauty of age as early as possible. What might have seemed harshness in her features when she was young, had turned now into a satisfactory strength of form and expression

which defied wrinkles, and was set off by a crown of white hair; her well-built figure was well covered with black drapery, her ears and neck comfortably caressed with lace, showing none of those withered spaces which one would think it a pitiable condition of poverty to expose. She glided along gracefully enough, her dark eyes still with a mischievous smile in them as she observed the company. Her partner's young richness of tint against the flattened hues and rougher forms of her aged head had an effect something like that of a fine flower against a lichenous branch. Perhaps the tenants hardly appreciated this pair. Lady Pentreath was nothing more than a straight, active old lady; Mr. Deronda was a familiar figure regarded with friendliness; but if he had been the heir, it would have been regretted that his face was not as unmistakably English as Sir Hugo's.

Grandcourt's appearance when he came up with Lady Mallinger was not impeached with foreignness: still the satisfaction in it was not complete. It would have been matter of congratulation if one who had the luck to inherit two old family estates had had more hair, a fresher colour, and a look of greater animation; but that fine families dwindled off into females, and estates ran together into the single heirship of a mealy-complexioned male, was a tendency in things which seemed to be accounted for by a citation of other instances. It was agreed that Mr. Grandcourt could never be taken for anything but what he was, — a born gentleman; and that, in fact, he looked like an heir. Perhaps the person least complacently disposed

towards him at that moment was Lady Mallinger, to whom going in procession up this country-dance with Grandcourt was a blazonment of herself as the infelicitous wife who had produced nothing but daughters, little better than no children, poor dear things, except for her own fondness and for Sir Hugo's wonderful goodness to them. But such inward discomfort could not prevent the gentle lady from looking fair and stout to admiration, or her full blue eyes from glancing mildly at her neighbours. All the mothers and fathers held it a thousand pities that she had not had a fine boy, or even several, — which might have been expected, to look at her when she was first married.

The gallery included only three sides of the quadrangle, the fourth being shut off as a lobby or corridor; one side was used for dancing, and the opposite side for the supper-table, while the intermediate part was less brilliantly lit, and fitted with comfortable seats. Later in the evening Gwendolen was in one of these seats, and Grandcourt was standing near her. They were not talking to each other: she was leaning backward in her chair, and he against the wall; and Deronda, happening to observe this, went up to ask her if she had resolved not to dance any more. Having himself been doing hard duty in this way among the guests, he thought he had earned the right to sink for a little while into the background, and he had spoken little to Gwendolen since their conversation at the piano the day before. Grandcourt's presence would only make it the easier to show that pleas-

ure in talking to her even about trivialities which would be a sign of friendliness; and he fancied that her face looked blank. A smile beamed over it as she saw him coming, and she raised herself from her leaning posture. Grandcourt had been grumbling at the *ennui* of staying so long in this stupid dance, and proposing that they should vanish: she had resisted on the ground of politeness, — not without being a little frightened at the probability that he was silently angry with her. She had her reason for staying, though she had begun to despair of the opportunity for the sake of which she had put the old necklace on her wrist. But now at last Deronda had come.

"Yes; I shall not dance any more. Are you not glad?" she said, with some gayety. "You might have felt obliged humbly to offer yourself as a partner, and I feel sure you have danced more than you like already."

"I will not deny that," said Deronda, "since you have danced as much as you like."

"But will you take trouble for me in another way, and fetch me a glass of that fresh water?"

It was but a few steps that Deronda had to go for the water. Gwendolen was wrapped in the lightest, softest of white woollen burnouses, under which her hands were hidden. While he was gone she had drawn off her glove, which was finished with a lace ruffle, and when she put up her hand to take the glass and lifted it to her mouth, the necklace-bracelet, which in its triple winding adapted itself clumsily to her wrist, was necessarily conspicuous. Grandcourt

saw it, and saw that it was attracting Deronda's notice.

"What is that hideous thing you have got on your wrist?" said the husband.

"That?" said Gwendolen, composedly, pointing to the turquoises, while she still held the glass; "it is an old necklace that I like to wear. I lost it once, and some one found it for me."

With that she gave the glass again to Deronda, who immediately carried it away, and on returning said, in order to banish any consciousness about the necklace, —

"It is worth while for you to go and look out at one of the windows on that side. You can see the finest possible moonlight on the stone pillars and carving, and shadows waving across it in the wind."

"I should like to see it. Will you go?" said Gwendolen, looking up at her husband.

He cast his eyes down at her, and saying, "No, Deronda will take you," slowly moved from his leaning attitude, and slowly walked away.

Gwendolen's face for a moment showed a fleeting vexation: she resented this show of indifference towards her. Deronda felt annoyed, chiefly for her sake; and with a quick sense that it would relieve her most to behave as if nothing peculiar had occurred, he said, "Will you take my arm and go, while only servants are there?" He thought that he understood well her action in drawing his attention to the necklace: she wished him to infer that she had submitted her mind to rebuke, — her speech and manner had from the first fluctuated towards that submis-

sion, — and that she felt no lingering resentment. Her evident confidence in his interpretation of her appealed to him as a peculiar claim.

When they were walking together, Gwendolen felt as if the annoyance which had just happened had removed another film of reserve from between them, and she had more right than before to be as open as she wished. She did not speak, being filled with the sense of silent confidence, until they were in front of the window looking out on the moonlit court. A sort of bower had been made round the window, turning it into a recess. Quitting his arm, she folded her hands in her burnous, and pressed her brow against the glass. He moved slightly away, and held the lapels of his coat with his thumbs under the collar as his manner was: he had a wonderful power of standing perfectly still, and in that position reminded one sometimes of Dante's *spiriti magni con occhi tardi e gravi.* (Doubtless some of these danced in their youth, doubted of their own vocation, and found their own times too modern.) He abstained from remarking on the scene before them, fearing that any indifferent words might jar on her; already the calm light and shadow, the ancient steadfast forms, had aloofness enough from those inward troubles which he felt sure were agitating her. And he judged aright: she would have been impatient of polite conversation. The incidents of the last minute or two had receded behind former thoughts which she had imagined herself uttering to Deronda, and which now urged themselves to her lips. In a subdued voice, she said, —

"Suppose I had gambled again, and lost the necklace again, what should you have thought of me?"

"Worse than I do now."

"Then you are mistaken about me. You wanted me not to do that, — not to make my gain out of another's loss in that way, — and I have done a great deal worse."

"I can imagine temptations," said Deronda. "Perhaps I am able to understand what you mean. At least I understand self-reproach." In spite of preparation he was almost alarmed at Gwendolen's precipitancy of confidence towards him, in contrast with her habitual resolute concealment.

"What should you do if you were like me, — feeling that you were wrong and miserable, and dreading everything to come?" It seemed that she was hurrying to make the utmost use of this opportunity to speak as she would.

"That is not to be amended by doing one thing only, but many," said Deronda, decisively.

"What?" said Gwendolen, hastily, moving her brow from the glass and looking at him.

He looked full at her in return, with what she thought was severity. He felt that it was not a moment in which he must let himself be tender, and flinch from implying a hard opinion.

"I mean there are many thoughts and habits that may help us to bear inevitable sorrow. Multitudes have to bear it."

She turned her brow to the window again, and said impatiently: "You must tell me, then, what to think and what to do; else why did you not let me go on doing as I liked and not

minding? If I had gone on gambling I might have won again, and I might have got not to care for anything else. You would not let me do that. Why should n't I do as I like, and not mind? Other people do." Poor Gwendolen's speech expressed nothing very clearly except her irritation.

"I don't believe you would ever get not to mind," said Deronda, with deep-toned decision. "If it were true that baseness and cruelty made an escape from pain, what difference would that make to people who can't be quite base or cruel? Idiots escape some pain; but you can't be an idiot. Some may do wrong to another without remorse; but suppose one does feel remorse? I believe you could never lead an injurious life — all reckless lives are injurious, pestilential — without feeling remorse." Deronda's unconscious fervour had gathered as he went on: he was uttering thoughts which he had used for himself in moments of painful meditation.

"Then tell me what better I can do," said Gwendolen, insistently.

"Many things. Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires. Try to care for what is best in thought and action, — something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot."

For an instant or two Gwendolen was mute. Then, again moving her brow from the glass, she said, —

"You mean that I am selfish and ignorant."

He met her fixed look in silence before he answered firmly, —

"You will not go on being selfish and ignorant."

She did not turn away her glance or let her eyelids fall, but a change came over her face, — that subtle change in nerve and muscle which will sometimes give a childlike expression even to the elderly: it is the subsidence of self-assertion.

"Shall I lead you back?" said Deronda, gently, turning and offering her his arm again. She took it silently, and in that way they came in sight of Grandcourt, who was walking slowly near their former place. Gwendolen went up to him and said, "I am ready to go now. Mr. Deronda will excuse us to Lady Mallinger."

"Certainly," said Deronda. "Lord and Lady Pentreath disappeared some time ago."

Grandcourt gave his arm in silent compliance, nodding over his shoulder to Deronda, and Gwendolen too only half turned to bow and say, "Thanks." The husband and wife left the gallery and paced the corridors in silence. When the door had closed on them in the boudoir, Grandcourt threw himself into a chair, and said, with undertoned peremptoriness, "Sit down." She, already in the expectation of something unpleasant, had thrown off her burnous with nervous unconsciousness, and immediately obeyed. Turning his eyes towards her, he began, —

"Oblige me in future by not showing whims like a mad woman in a play."

"What do you mean?" said Gwendolen.

"I suppose there is some understanding be-

tween you and Deronda about that thing you have on your wrist. If you have anything to say to him, say it; but don't carry on a telegraphing which other people are supposed not to see. It 's damnably vulgar."

"You can know all about the necklace," said Gwendolen, her angry pride resisting the nightmare of fear.

"I don't want to know. Keep to yourself whatever you like." Grandcourt paused between each sentence, and in each his speech seemed to become more preternaturally distinct in its inward tones. "What I care to know, I shall know without your telling me. Only you will please to behave as becomes my wife, and not make a spectacle of yourself."

"Do you object to my talking to Mr. Deronda?"

"I don't care two straws about Deronda, or any other conceited hanger-on. You may talk to him as much as you like. He is not going to take my place. You are my wife. And you will either fill your place properly — to the world and to me — or you will go to the devil."

"I never intended anything but to fill my place properly," said Gwendolen, with bitterest mortification in her soul.

"You put that thing on your wrist, and hid it from me till you wanted him to see it. Only fools go into that deaf and dumb talk, and think they 're secret. You will understand that you are not to compromise yourself. Behave with dignity. That 's all I have to say."

With that last word Grandcourt rose, turned his back to the fire and looked down on her.

She was mute. There was no reproach that she dared to fling at him in return for these insulting admonitions, and the very reason she felt them to be insulting was that their purport went with the most absolute dictate of her pride. What she would least like to incur was the making a fool of herself and being compromised. It was futile and irrelevant to try and explain that Deronda too had only been a monitor, — the strongest of all monitors. Grandcourt was contemptuous, not jealous; contemptuously certain of all the subjection he cared for. Why could she not rebel, and defy him? She longed to do it. But she might as well have tried to defy the texture of her nerves and the palpitation of her heart. Her husband had a ghostly army at his back, that could close round her wherever she might turn. She sat in her splendid attire, like a white image of helplessness, and he seemed to gratify himself with looking at her. She could not even make a passionate exclamation, or throw up her arms, as she would have done in her maiden days. The sense of his scorn kept her still.

"Shall I ring?" he said, after what seemed to her a long while. She moved her head in assent, and after ringing he went to his dressing-room.

Certain words were gnawing within her. "The wrong you have done me will be your own curse." As he closed the door, the bitter tears rose, and the gnawing words provoked an answer: "Why did you put your fangs into me and not into him?" It was uttered in a whisper, as the tears came up silently. But immediately

she pressed her handkerchief against her eyes, and checked her tendency to sob.

The next day, recovered from the shuddering fit of this evening scene, she determined to use the charter which Grandcourt had scornfully given her, and to talk as much as she liked with Deronda; but no opportunities occurred, and any little devices she could imagine for creating them were rejected by her pride, which was now doubly active. Not towards Deronda himself, — she was curiously free from alarm lest he should think her openness wanting in dignity: it was part of his power over her that she believed him free from all misunderstanding as to the way in which she appealed to him; or rather, that he should misunderstand her had never entered into her mind. But the last morning came, and still she had never been able to take up the dropped thread of their talk, and she was without devices. She and Grandcourt were to leave at three o'clock. It was too irritating that after a walk in the grounds had been planned in Deronda's hearing, he did not present himself to join in it. Grandcourt was gone with Sir Hugo to King's Topping, to see the old manor-house; others of the gentlemen were shooting; she was condemned to go and see the decoy and the water-fowl, and everything else that she least wanted to see, with the ladies, with old Lord Pentreath and his anecdotes, with Mr. Vandernoodt and his admiring manners. The irritation became too strong for her: without premeditation, she took advantage of the winding road to linger a little out of sight, and then set off back to the house, almost running when

she was safe from observation. She entered by a side door, and the library was on her left hand: Deronda, she knew, was often there; why might she not turn in there as well as into any other room in the house? She had been taken there expressly to see the illuminated family tree, and other remarkable things, — what more natural than that she should like to look in again? The thing most to be feared was that the room would be empty of Deronda, for the door was ajar. She pushed it gently, and looked round it. He was there, writing busily at a distant table, with his back towards the door (in fact, Sir Hugo had asked him to answer some constituents' letters which had become pressing). An enormous log-fire, with the scent of russia from the books, made the great room as warmly odorous as a private chapel in which the censers have been swinging. It seemed too daring to go in, — too rude to speak and interrupt him; yet she went in on the noiseless carpet, and stood still for two or three minutes, till Deronda, having finished a letter, pushed it aside for signature, and threw himself back to consider whether there were anything else for him to do, or whether he could walk out for the chance of meeting the party which included Gwendolen, when he heard her voice saying, " Mr. Deronda."

It was certainly startling. He rose hastily, turned round, and pushed away his chair with a strong expression of surprise.

" Am I wrong to come in? " said Gwendolen.

" I thought you were far on your walk," said Deronda.

" I turned back," said Gwendolen.

"Do you not intend to go out again? I could join you now, if you would allow me."

"No; I want to say something, and I can't stay long," said Gwendolen, speaking quickly in a subdued tone, while she walked forward and rested her arms and muff on the back of the chair he had pushed away from him. "I want to tell you that it is really so, — I can't help feeling remorse for having injured others. That was what I meant when I said that I had done worse than gamble again and pawn the necklace again, — something more injurious, as you called it. And I can't alter it. I am punished, but I can't alter it. You said I could do many things. Tell me again. What should you do — what should you feel, if you were in my place?"

The hurried directness with which she spoke — the absence of all her little airs, as if she were only concerned to use the time in getting an answer that would guide her, made her appeal unspeakably touching.

Deronda said, "I should feel something of what you feel, — deep sorrow."

"But what would you try to do?" said Gwendolen, with urgent quickness.

"Order my life so as to make any possible amends, and keep away from doing any sort of injury again," said Deronda, catching her sense that the time for speech was brief.

"But I can't, — I can't; I must go on," said Gwendolen, in a passionate loud whisper. "I have thrust out others, — I have made my gain out of their loss, — tried to make it, — tried. And I must go on. I can't alter it."

It was impossible to answer this instantane-

ously. Her words had confirmed his conjecture, and the situation of all concerned rose in swift images before him. His feeling for those who had been "thrust out" sanctioned her remorse; he could not try to nullify it, yet his heart was full of pity for her. But as soon as he could he answered, taking up her last words, —

"That is the bitterest of all, — to wear the yoke of our own wrong-doing. But if you submitted to that, as men submit to maiming or a lifelong incurable disease? — and make the unalterable wrong a reason for more effort towards a good that may do something to counterbalance the evil? One who has committed irremediable errors may be scourged by that consciousness into a higher course than is common. There are many examples. Feeling what it is to have spoiled one life may well make us long to save other lives from being spoiled."

"But you have not wronged any one, or spoiled their lives," said Gwendolen, hastily. "It is only others who have wronged *you.*"

Deronda coloured slightly, but said immediately, "I suppose our keen feeling for ourselves might end in giving us a keen feeling for others, if, when we are suffering acutely, we were to consider that others go through the same sharp experience. That is a sort of remorse before commission. Can't you understand that?"

"I think I do, — now," said Gwendolen. "But you were right, — I *am* selfish. I have never thought much of any one's feelings, except my mother's. I have not been fond of people. — But what can I do?" she went on, more quickly. "I must get up in the morning

and do what every one else does. It is all like a dance set beforehand. I seem to see all that can be, — and I am tired and sick of it. And the world is all confusion to me," — she made a gesture of disgust. "You say I am ignorant. But what is the good of trying to know more, unless life were worth more?"

"This good," said Deronda, promptly, with a touch of indignant severity, which he was inclined to encourage as his own safeguard: "life *would* be worth more to you; some real knowledge would give you an interest in the world beyond the small drama of personal desires. It is the curse of your life, — forgive me, — of so many lives, that all passion is spent in that narrow round, for want of ideas and sympathies to make a larger home for it. Is there any single occupation of mind that you care about with passionate delight or even independent interest?"

Deronda paused; but Gwendolen, looking startled and thrilled as by an electric shock, said nothing, and he went on more insistently, —

"I take what you said of music for a small example, — it answers for all larger things, — you will not cultivate it for the sake of a private joy in it. What sort of earth or heaven would hold any spiritual wealth in it for souls pauperized by inaction? If one firmament has no stimulus for our attention and awe, I don't see how four would have it. We should stamp every possible world with the flatness of our own insanity, — which is necessarily impious, without faith or fellowship. The refuge you are needing from personal trouble is the higher, the religious life, which holds an enthusiasm for something

more than our own appetites and vanities. The few may find themselves in it simply by an elevation of feeling; but for us who have to struggle for our wisdom, the higher life must be a region in which the affections are clad with knowledge."

The half-indignant remonstrance that vibrated in Deronda's voice came, as often happens, from the habit of inward argument with himself rather than from severity towards Gwendolen; but it had a more beneficent effect on her than any soothings. Nothing is feebler than the indolent rebellion of complaint; and to be roused into self-judgment is comparative activity. For the moment she felt like a shaken child, shaken out of its wailings into awe, and she said humbly, —

"I will try. I will think."

They both stood silent for a minute, as if some third presence had arrested them, — for Deronda, too, was under that sense of pressure which is apt to come when our own winged words seem to be hovering around us, — till Gwendolen began again, —

"You said affection was the best thing, and I have hardly any, — none about me. If I could, I would have mamma; but that is impossible. Things have changed to me so, — in such a short time. What I used not to like, I long for now. I think I am almost getting fond of the old things now they are gone." Her lip trembled.

"Take the present suffering as a painful letting in of light," said Deronda, more gently. "You are conscious of more beyond the round

of your own inclinations, — you know more of the way in which your life presses on others, and their life on yours. I don't think you could have escaped the painful process in some form or other."

"But it is a very cruel form," said Gwendolen, beating her foot on the ground with returning agitation. "I am frightened at everything. I am frightened at myself. When my blood is fired I can do daring things, — take any leap; but that makes me frightened at myself." She was looking at nothing outside her; but her eyes were directed toward the window, away from Deronda, who with quick comprehension said, —

"Turn your fear into a safeguard. Keep your dread fixed on the idea of increasing that remorse which is so bitter to you. Fixed meditation may do a great deal towards defining our longing or dread. We are not always in a state of strong emotion, and when we are calm we can use our memories and gradually change the bias of our fear, as we do our tastes. Take your fear as a safeguard. It is like quickness of hearing. It may make consequences passionately present to you. Try to take hold of your sensibility, and use it as if it were a faculty, like vision." Deronda uttered each sentence more urgently; he felt as if he were seizing a faint chance of rescuing her from some indefinite danger.

"Yes, I know; I understand what you mean," said Gwendolen, in her loud whisper, not turning her eyes, but lifting up her small gloved hand and waving it in deprecation of the notion that it was easy to obey that advice. "But if feelings rose, — there are some feelings,

— hatred and anger, — how can I be good when they keep rising? And if there came a moment when I felt stifled and could bear it no longer —" She broke off, and with agitated lips looked at Deronda, but the expression on his face pierced her with an entirely new feeling. He was under the baffling difficulty of discerning that what he had been urging on her was thrown into the pallid distance of mere thought before the outburst of her habitual emotion. It was as if he saw her drowning while his limbs were bound. The pained compassion which was spread over his features as he watched her affected her with a compunction unlike any she had felt before, and in a changed, imploring tone she said, —

"I am grieving you. I am ungrateful. You *can* help me. I will think of everything. I will try. Tell me — it will not be a pain to you that I have dared to speak of my trouble to you? You began it, you know, when you rebuked me." There was a melancholy smile on her lips as she said that, but she added more entreatingly, "It will not be a pain to you?"

"Not if it does anything to save you from an evil to come," said Deronda, with strong emphasis; "otherwise it will be a lasting pain."

"No — no — it shall not be. It may be — it shall be better with me because I have known you." She turned immediately, and quitted the room.

When she was on the first landing of the staircase, Sir Hugo passed across the hall on his way to the library, and saw her. Grandcourt was not with him.

Deronda, when the baronet entered, was standing in his ordinary attitude, grasping his coat-collar, with his back to the table, and with that indefinable expression by which we judge that a man is still in the shadow of a scene which he has just gone through. He moved, however, and began to arrange the letters.

"Has Mrs. Grandcourt been in here?" said Sir Hugo.

"Yes, she has."

"Where are the others?"

"I believe she left them somewhere in the grounds."

After a moment's silence, in which Sir Hugo looked at a letter without reading it, he said, "I hope you are not playing with fire, Dan, — you understand me?"

"I believe I do, sir," said Deronda, after a slight hesitation, which had some repressed anger in it. "But there is nothing answering to your metaphor, — no fire, and therefore no chance of scorching."

Sir Hugo looked searchingly at him, and then said, "So much the better. For between ourselves, I fancy there may be some hidden gunpowder in that establishment."

CHAPTER III

"*Aspern.* Pardon, my lord — I speak for Sigismund.
Fronsberg. For him? Oh, ay — for him I always hold
A pardon safe in bank, sure he will draw
Sooner or later on me. What his need?
Mad project broken? fine mechanic wings
That would not fly? durance, assault on watch,
Bill for Epernay, not a crust to eat?
Aspern. Oh, none of these, my lord; he has escaped
From Circe's herd, and seeks to win the love
Of your fair ward Cecilia: but would win
First your consent. You frown.
Fronsberg. Distinguish words.
I said I held a pardon, not consent."

IN spite of Deronda's reasons for wishing to be in town again, — reasons in which his anxiety for Mirah was blent with curiosity to know more of the enigmatic Mordecai, — he did not manage to go up before Sir Hugo, who preceded his family that he might be ready for the opening of Parliament on the 6th of February. Deronda took up his quarters in Park Lane, aware that his chambers were sufficiently tenanted by Hans Meyrick. This was what he expected; but he found other things not altogether according to his expectations.

Most of us remember Retzsch's drawing of destiny in the shape of Mephistopheles playing at chess with man for his soul, a game in which we may imagine the clever adversary making a feint of unintended moves so as to set the beguiled mortal on carrying his defensive pieces away from the true point of attack. The fiend makes preparation his favourite object of mockery, that he may fatally persuade us against

our best safeguard: he even meddles so far as to suggest our taking out waterproofs when he is well aware the sky is going to clear, foreseeing that the imbecile will turn this delusion into a prejudice against waterproofs instead of giving a closer study to the weather-signs. It is a peculiar test of a man's metal when, after he has painfully adjusted himself to what seems a wise provision, he finds all his mental precaution a little beside the mark, and his excellent intentions no better than miscalculated dovetails, accurately cut from a wrong starting-point. His magnanimity has got itself ready to meet misbehaviour, and finds quite a different call upon it. Something of this kind happened to Deronda.

His first impression was one of pure pleasure and amusement at finding his sitting-room transformed into an *atelier* strewed with miscellaneous drawings and with the contents of two chests from Rome, the lower half of the windows darkened with baize, and the blond Hans in his weird youth as the presiding genius of the littered place, — his hair longer than of old, his face more whimsically creased, and his high voice as usual getting higher under the excitement of rapid talk. The friendship of the two had been kept up warmly since the memorable Cambridge time, not only by correspondence but by little episodes of companionship abroad and in England, and the original relation of confidence on one side and indulgence on the other had been developed in practice, as is wont to be the case where such spiritual borrowing and lending has been well begun.

"I knew you would like to see my casts and antiquities," said Hans, after the first hearty greetings and inquiries, "so I did n't scruple to unlade my chests here. But I 've found two rooms at Chelsea not many hundred yards from my mother and sisters, and I shall soon be ready to hang out there, — when they 've scraped the walls and put in some new lights. That 's all I 'm waiting for. But you see I don't wait to begin work: you can't conceive what a great fellow I 'm going to be. The seed of immortality has sprouted within me."

"Only a fungoid growth, I dare say, — a crowing disease in the lungs," said Deronda, accustomed to treat Hans in brotherly fashion. He was walking towards some drawings propped on the ledge of his bookcases: five rapidly sketched heads, — different aspects of the same face. He stood at a convenient distance from them, without making any remark. Hans, too, was silent for a minute, took up his palette, and began touching the picture on his easel.

"What do you think of them?" he said at last.

"The full face looks too massive; otherwise the likenesses are good," said Deronda, more coldly than was usual with him.

"No, it is not too massive," said Hans, decisively. "I have noted that. There is always a little surprise when one passes from the profile to the full face. But I shall enlarge her scale for Berenice. I am making a Berenice series, — look at the sketches along there, — and now I think of it, you are just the model

I want for the Agrippa." Hans, still with pencil and palette in hand, had moved to Deronda's side while he said this; but he added hastily, as if conscious of a mistake, "No, no, I forgot; you don't like sitting for your portrait, confound you! However, I 've picked up a capital Titus. There are to be five in the series. The first is Berenice clasping the knees of Gessius Florus and beseeching him to spare her people; I 've got that on the easel. Then this, where she is standing on the Xystus with Agrippa, entreating the people not to injure themselves by resistance."

"Agrippa's legs will never do," said Deronda.

"The legs are good realistically," said Hans, his face creasing drolly; "public men are often shaky about the legs, — 'Their legs, the emblem of their various thought,' as somebody says in the 'Rehearsal.'"

"But these are as impossible as the legs of Raphael's Alcibiades," said Deronda.

"Then they are good ideally," said Hans. "Agrippa's legs were possibly bad; I idealize that, and make them impossibly bad. Art, my Eugenius, must intensify. But never mind the legs now: the third sketch in the series is Berenice exulting in the prospect of being Empress of Rome, when the news has come that Vespasian is declared Emperor and her lover Titus his successor."

"You must put a scroll in her mouth, else people will not understand that. You can't tell that in a picture."

"It will make them feel their ignorance then,

— an excellent æsthetic effect. The fourth is, Titus sending Berenice away from Rome after she has shared his palace for ten years, — both reluctant, both sad, — *invitus invitam*, as Suetonius hath it. I 've found a model for the Roman brute."

"Shall you make Berenice look fifty? She must have been that."

"No, no; a few mature touches to show the lapse of time. Dark-eyed beauty wears well, hers particularly. But now, here is the fifth: Berenice seated lonely on the ruins of Jerusalem. That is pure imagination. That is what ought to have been — perhaps was. Now, see how I tell a pathetic negative. Nobody knows what became of her: that is finely indicated by the series coming to a close. There is no sixth picture." Here Hans pretended to speak with a gasping sense of sublimity, and drew back his head with a frown, as if looking for a like impression on Deronda. "I break off in the Homeric style. The story is chipped off, so to speak, and passes with a ragged edge into nothing, — *le néant;* can anything be more sublime, especially in French? The vulgar would desire to see her corpse and burial — perhaps her will read and her linen distributed. But now come and look at this on the easel. I have made some way there."

"That beseeching attitude is really good," said Deronda, after a moment's contemplation. "You have been very industrious in the Christmas holidays; for I suppose you have taken up the subject since you came to London." Neither of them had yet mentioned Mirah.

"No," said Hans, putting touches to his picture, "I made up my mind to the subject before. I take that lucky chance for an augury that I am going to burst on the world as a great painter. I saw a splendid woman in the Trastevere, — the grandest women there are half Jewesses, — and she set me hunting for a fine situation of a Jewess at Rome. Like other men of vast learning, I ended by taking what lay on the surface. I 'll show you a sketch of the Trasteverina's head when I can lay my hands on it."

"I should think she would be a more suitable model for Berenice," said Deronda, not knowing exactly how to express his discontent.

"Not a bit of it. The model ought to be the most beautiful Jewess in the world, and I have found her."

"Have you made yourself sure that she would like to figure in that character? I should think no woman would be more abhorrent to her. Does she quite know what you are doing?"

"Certainly. I got her to throw herself precisely into this attitude. Little mother sat for Gessius Florus, and Mirah clasped her knees." — Here Hans went a little way off and looked at the effect of his touches.

"I dare say she knows nothing about Berenice's history," said Deronda, feeling more indignation than he would have been able to justify.

"Oh, yes, she does, — ladies' edition. Berenice was a fervid patriot, but was beguiled by love and ambition into attaching herself to the arch-enemy of her people. Whence the Nemesis. Mirah takes it as a tragic parable, and cries

to think what the penitent Berenice suffered as she wandered back to Jerusalem and sat desolate amidst desolation. That was her own phrase. I could n't find in my heart to tell her I invented that part of the story."

"Show me your Trasteverina," said Deronda, chiefly in order to hinder himself from saying something else.

"Shall you mind turning over that folio?" said Hans. "My studies of heads are all there. But they are in confusion. You will perhaps find her next to a crop-eared undergraduate."

After Deronda had been turning over the drawings a minute or two, he said, —

"These seem to be all Cambridge heads and bits of country. Perhaps I had better begin at the other end."

"No; you 'll find her about the middle. I emptied one folio into another."

"Is this one of your undergraduates?" said Deronda, holding up a drawing. "It 's an unusually agreeable face."

"That? Oh, that 's a man named Gascoigne, — Rex Gascoigne. An uncommonly good fellow; his upper lip, too, is good. I coached him before he got his scholarship. He ought to have taken honours last Easter. But he was ill, and has had to stay up another year. I must look him up. I want to know how he 's going on."

"Here she is, I suppose," said Deronda, holding up a sketch of the Trasteverina.

"Ah," said Hans, looking at it rather contemptuously, "too coarse. I was unregenerate then."

Deronda was silent while he closed the folio,

leaving the Trasteverina outside. Then grasping his coat-collar, and turning towards Hans, he said, "I dare say my scruples are excessive, Meyrick, but I must ask you to oblige me by giving up this notion."

Hans threw himself into a tragic attitude, and screamed: "What! my series — my immortal Berenice series? Think of what you are saying, man, — destroying, as Milton says, not a life but an immortality. Wait before you answer, that I may deposit the implements of my art and be ready to uproot my hair."

Here Hans laid down his pencil and palette, threw himself backward into a great chair, and hanging limply over the side, shook his long hair half over his face, lifted his hooked fingers on each side his head, and looked up with comic terror at Deronda, who was obliged to smile as he said, —

"Paint as many Berenices as you like, but I wish you could feel with me — perhaps you will, on reflection — that you should choose another model."

"Why?" said Hans, standing up, and looking serious again.

"Because she may get into such a position that her face is likely to be recognized. Mrs. Meyrick and I are anxious for her that she should be known as an admirable singer. It is right, and she wishes it, that she should make herself independent. And she has excellent chances. One good introduction is secured already. And I am going to speak to Klesmer. Her face may come to be very well known, and — well, it is useless to attempt to explain,

unless you feel as I do. I believe that if Mirah saw the circumstances clearly, she would strongly object to being exhibited in this way, — to allowing herself to be used as a model for a heroine of this sort."

As Hans stood with his thumbs in the belt of his blouse listening to this speech, his face showed a growing surprise melting into amusement, that at last would have its way in an explosive laugh; but seeing that Deronda looked gravely offended, he checked himself to say: "Excuse my laughing, Deronda. You never gave me an advantage over you before. If it had been about anything but my own pictures, I should have swallowed every word because you said it. And so you actually believe that I should get my five pictures hung on the line in a conspicuous position, and carefully studied by the public? Zounds, man! cider-cup and conceit never gave me half such a beautiful dream. My pictures are likely to remain as private as the utmost hypersensitiveness could desire."

Hans turned to paint again as a way of filling up awkward pauses. Deronda stood perfectly still, recognizing his mistake as to publicity, but also conscious that his repugnance was not much diminished. He was the reverse of satisfied either with himself or with Hans; but the power of being quiet carries a man well through moments of embarrassment. Hans had a reverence for his friend which made him feel a sort of shyness at Deronda's being in the wrong; but it was not in his nature to give up anything readily, though it were only a whim

— or rather, especially if it were a whim, — and he presently went on, painting the while: —

"But even supposing I had a public rushing after my pictures as if they were a railway series including nurses, babies, and bonnet-boxes, I can't see any justice in your objection. Every painter worth remembering has painted the face he admired most, as often as he could. It is a part of his soul that goes out into his pictures. He diffuses its influence in that way. He puts what he hates into a caricature. He puts what he adores into some sacred, heroic form. If a man could paint the woman he loves a thousand times as the *Stella Maris* to put courage into the sailors on board a thousand ships, so much the more honour to her. Is n't that better than painting a piece of staring immodesty and calling it by a worshipful name?"

"Every objection can be answered if you take broad ground enough, Hans: no special question of conduct can be properly settled in that way," said Deronda, with a touch of peremptoriness. "I might admit all your generalities, and yet be right in saying you ought not to publish Mirah's face as a model for Berenice. But I give up the question of publicity. I was unreasonable there." Deronda hesitated a moment. "Still, even as a private affair, there might be good reasons for your not indulging yourself too much in painting her from the point of view you mention. You must feel that her situation at present is a very delicate one; and until she is in more independence, she should be kept as carefully as a bit of Venetian glass, for fear of shaking her out of the safe place

she is lodged in. Are you quite sure of your own discretion? Excuse me, Hans. My having found her binds me to watch over her. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly," said Hans, turning his face into a good-humoured smile. "You have the very justifiable opinion of me that I am likely to shatter all the glass in my way, and break my own skull into the bargain. Quite fair. Since I got into the scrape of being born, everything I have liked best has been a scrape either for myself or somebody else. Everything I have taken to heartily has somehow turned into a scrape. My painting is the last scrape; and I shall be all my life getting out of it. You think now I shall get into a scrape at home. No; I am regenerate. You think I must be over head and ears in love with Mirah. Quite right; so I am. But you think I shall scream and plunge and spoil everything. There you are mistaken, — excusably but transcendently mistaken. I have undergone baptism by immersion. Awe takes care of me. Ask the little mother."

"You don't reckon a hopeless love among your scrapes, then?" said Deronda, whose voice seemed to get deeper as Hans's went higher.

"I don't mean to call mine hopeless," said Hans, with provoking coolness, laying down his tools, thrusting his thumbs into his belt, and moving away a little, as if to contemplate his picture more deliberately.

"My dear fellow, you are only preparing misery for yourself," said Deronda, decisively. "She would not marry a Christian, even if she

loved him. Have you heard her — of course you have — heard her speak of her people and her religion?"

"That can't last," said Hans. "She will see no Jew who is tolerable. Every male of that race is insupportable, — 'insupportably advancing' — his nose."

"She may rejoin her family. That is what she longs for. Her mother and brother are probably strict Jews."

"I 'll turn proselyte if she wishes it," said Hans, with a shrug and a laugh.

"Don't talk nonsense, Hans. I thought you professed a serious love for her," said Deronda, getting heated.

"So I do. You think it desperate, but I don't."

"I know nothing; I can't tell what has happened. We must be prepared for surprises. But I can hardly imagine a greater surprise to me than that there should have seemed to be anything in Mirah's sentiments for you to found a romantic hope on." Deronda felt that he was too contemptuous.

"I don't found my romantic hopes on a woman's sentiments," said Hans, perversely inclined to be the merrier when he was addressed with gravity. "I go to science and philosophy for my romance. Nature designed Mirah to fall in love with me. The amalgamation of races demands it — the mitigation of human ugliness demands it — the affinity of contrasts assures it. I am the utmost contrast to Mirah, — a bleached Christian who can't sing two notes in tune. Who has a chance against me?"

"I see now; it was all *persiflage*. You don't mean a word of what you say, Meyrick," said Deronda, laying his hand on Meyrick's shoulder, and speaking in a tone of cordial relief. "I was a wiseacre to answer you seriously."

"Upon my honour I do mean it, though," said Hans, facing round and laying his left hand on Deronda's shoulder, so that their eyes fronted each other closely. "I am at the confessional. I meant to tell you as soon as you came. My mother says you are Mirah's guardian, and she thinks herself responsible to you for every breath that falls on Mirah in her house. Well, I love her — I worship her — I won't despair — I mean to deserve her."

"My dear fellow, you can't do it," said Deronda, quickly.

"I should have said, I mean to try."

"You can't keep your resolve, Hans. You used to resolve what you would do for your mother and sisters."

"You have a right to reproach me, old fellow," said Hans, gently.

"Perhaps I am ungenerous," said Deronda, not apologetically, however. "Yet it can't be ungenerous to warn you that you are indulging mad, Quixotic expectations."

"Who will be hurt but myself, then?" said Hans, putting out his lip. "I am not going to say anything to her, unless I felt sure of the answer. I dare not ask the oracles: I prefer a cheerful caliginosity, as Sir Thomas Browne might say. I would rather run my chance there and lose, than be sure of winning anywhere else. And I don't mean to swallow the poison of

despair, though you are disposed to thrust it on me. I am giving up wine; so let me get a little drunk on hope and vanity."

"With all my heart, if it will do you any good," said Deronda, loosing Hans's shoulder with a little push. He made his tone kindly, but his words were from the lip only. As to his real feeling he was silenced.

He was conscious of that peculiar irritation which will sometimes befall the man whom others are inclined to trust as a mentor, — the irritation of perceiving that he is supposed to be entirely off the same plane of desire and temptation as those who confess to him. Our guides, we pretend, must be sinless: as if those were not often the best teachers who only yesterday got corrected for their mistakes. Throughout their friendship Deronda had been used to Hans's egotism, but he had never before felt intolerant of it: when Hans, habitually pouring out his own feelings and affairs, had never cared for any detail in return, and, if he chanced to know any, had soon forgotten it. Deronda had been inwardly as well as outwardly indulgent, — nay, satisfied. But now he noted with some indignation, all the stronger because it must not be betrayed, Hans's evident assumption that for any danger of rivalry or jealousy in relation to Mirah, Deronda was as much out of the question as the angel Gabriel. It is one thing to be resolute in placing one's self out of the question, and another to endure that others should perform that exclusion for us. He had expected that Hans would give him trouble: what he had not expected was that the trouble

would have a strong element of personal feeling. And he was rather ashamed that Hans's hopes caused him uneasiness in spite of his well-warranted conviction that they would never be fulfilled. They had raised an image of Mirah changing; and however he might protest that the change would not happen, the protest kept up the unpleasant image. Altogether, poor Hans seemed to be entering into Deronda's experience in a disproportionate manner, — going beyond his part of rescued prodigal, and rousing a feeling quite distinct from compassionate affection.

When Deronda went to Chelsea he was not made as comfortable as he ought to have been by Mrs. Meyrick's evident release from anxiety about the beloved but incalculable son. Mirah seemed livelier than before, and for the first time he saw her laugh. It was when they were talking of Hans, he being naturally the mother's first topic. Mirah wished to know if Deronda had seen Mr. Hans going through a sort of character piece without changing his dress.

"He passes from one figure to another as if he were a bit of flame where you fancied the figures without seeing them," said Mirah, full of her subject; "he is so wonderfully quick. I used never to like comic things on the stage, — they were dwelt on too long; but all in one minute Mr. Hans makes himself a blind bard, and then Rienzi addressing the Romans, and then an opera-dancer, and then a desponding young gentleman, — I am sorry for them all, and yet I laugh, all in one" — here Mirah gave

a little laugh that might have entered into a song.

"We hardly thought that Mirah could laugh till Hans came," said Mrs. Meyrick, seeing that Deronda, like herself, was observing the pretty picture.

"Hans seems in great force just now," said Deronda, in a tone of congratulation. "I don't wonder at his enlivening you."

"He 's been just perfect ever since he came back," said Mrs. Meyrick, keeping to herself the next clause, — "if it will but last."

"It is a great happiness," said Mirah, "to see the son and brother come into this dear home. And I hear them all talk about what they did together when they were little. That seems like heaven, to have a mother and brother who talk in that way. I have never had it."

"Nor I," said Deronda, involuntarily.

"No?" said Mirah, regretfully. "I wish you had. I wish you had had every good." The last words were uttered with a serious ardour as if they had been part of a litany, while her eyes were fixed on Deronda, who with his elbow on the back of his chair was contemplating her by the new light of the impression she had made on Hans, and the possibility of her being attracted by that extraordinary contrast. It was no more than what had happened on each former visit of his, that Mirah appeared to enjoy speaking of what she felt very much as a little girl fresh from school pours forth spontaneously all the long-repressed chat for which she has found willing ears. For the first time in her life Mirah was among those whom she entirely trusted, and

her original visionary impression that Deronda was a divinely sent messenger hung about his image still, stirring always anew the disposition to reliance and openness. It was in this way she took what might have been the injurious flattery of admiring attention into which her helpless dependence had been suddenly transformed; every one around her watched for her looks and words, and the effect on her was simply that of having passed from a stifling imprisonment into an exhilarating air which made speech and action a delight. To her mind it was all a gift from others' goodness. But that word of Deronda's implying that there had been some lack in his life which might be compared with anything she had known in hers, was an entirely new inlet of thought about him. After her first expression of sorrowful surprise she went on, —

"But Mr. Hans said yesterday that you thought so much of others you hardly wanted anything for yourself. He told us a wonderful story of Bouddha giving himself to the famished tigress to save her and her little ones from starving. And he said you were like Bouddha. That is what we all imagine of you."

"Pray don't imagine that," said Deronda, who had lately been finding such suppositions rather exasperating. "Even if it were true that I thought so much of others, it would not follow that I had no wants for myself. When Bouddha let the tigress eat him, he might have been very hungry himself."

"Perhaps if he was starved he would not mind so much about being eaten," said Mab, shyly.

"Please don't think that, Mab; it takes away the beauty of the action," said Mirah.

"But if it were true, Mirah?" said the rational Amy, having a half-holiday from her teaching; "you always take what is beautiful as if it were true."

"So it is," said Mirah, gently. "If people have thought what is the most beautiful and the best thing, it must be true. It is always there."

"Now, Mirah, what *do* you mean?" said Amy.

"I understand her," said Deronda, coming to the rescue. "It is a truth in thought, though it may never have been carried out in action. It lives as an idea. Is that it?" He turned to Mirah, who was listening with a blind look in her lovely eyes.

"It must be that, because you understand me, but I cannot quite explain," said Mirah, rather abstractedly, — still searching for some expression.

"But *was* it beautiful for Bouddha to let the tiger eat him?" said Amy, changing her ground. "It would be a bad pattern."

"The world would get full of fat tigers," said Mab.

Deronda laughed, but defended the myth. "It is like a passionate word," he said; "the exaggeration is a flash of fervour. It is an extreme image of what is happening every day, — the transmutation of self."

"I think I can say what I mean now," said Mirah, who had not heard the intermediate talk. "When the best thing comes into our thoughts, it is like what my mother has been to me. She

has been just as really with me as all the other people about me, — often more really with me."

Deronda, inwardly wincing under this illustration, which brought other possible realities about that mother vividly before him, presently turned the conversation by saying: "But we must not get too far away from practical matters. I came, for one thing, to tell of an interview I had yesterday, which I hope Mirah will find to have been useful to her. It was with Klesmer, the great pianist."

"Ah?" said Mrs. Meyrick, with satisfaction. "You think he will help her?"

"I hope so. He is very much occupied, but has promised to fix a time for receiving and hearing Miss Lapidoth, as we must learn to call her," — here Deronda smiled at Mirah, — "if she consents to go to him."

"I shall be very grateful," said Mirah, calmly. "He wants to hear me sing, before he can judge whether I ought to be helped."

Deronda was struck with her plain sense about these matters of practical concern.

"It will not be at all trying to you, I hope, if Mrs. Meyrick will kindly go with you to Klesmer's house."

"Oh, no, not at all trying. I have been doing that all my life, — I mean, told to do things that others may judge of me. And I have gone through a bad trial of that sort. I am prepared to bear it, and do some very small thing. Is Klesmer a severe man?"

"He is peculiar, but I have not had experience enough of him to know whether he would

be what you would call severe. I know he is kind-hearted, — kind in action, if not in speech."

"I have been used to be frowned at and not praised," said Mirah.

"By the by, Klesmer frowns a good deal," said Deronda, "but there is often a sort of smile in his eyes all the while. Unhappily he wears spectacles, so you must catch him in the right light to see the smile."

"I shall not be frightened," said Mirah. "If he were like a roaring lion, he only wants me to sing. I shall do what I can."

"Then I feel sure you will not mind being invited to sing in Lady Mallinger's drawing-room," said Deronda. "She intends to ask you next month, and will invite many ladies to hear you, who are likely to want lessons from you for their daughters."

"How fast we are mounting!" said Mrs. Meyrick, with delight. "You never thought of getting grand so quickly, Mirah."

"I am a little frightened at being called Miss Lapidoth," said Mirah, colouring with a new uneasiness. "Might I be called Cohen?"

"I understand you," said Deronda, promptly. "But, I assure you, you must not be called Cohen. The name is inadmissible for a singer. This is one of the trifles in which we must conform to vulgar prejudice. We could choose some other name, however, — such as singers ordinarily choose, — an Italian or Spanish name, which would suit your *physique*."

To Deronda just now the name Cohen was equivalent to the ugliest of yellow badges.

Mirah reflected a little, anxiously, then said:

"No. If Cohen will not do, I will keep the name I have been called by. I will not hide myself. I have friends to protect me. And now, — if my father were very miserable and wanted help, — no," she said, looking at Mrs. Meyrick, "I should think then, that he was perhaps crying as I used to see him, and had nobody to pity him, and I had hidden myself from him. He had none belonging to him but me. Others that made friends with him always left him."

"Keep to what you feel right, my dear child," said Mrs. Meyrick. "*I* would not persuade you to the contrary." For her own part she had no patience or pity for that father, and would have left him to his crying.

Deronda was saying to himself, "I am rather base to be angry with Hans. How can he help being in love with her? But it is too absurdly presumptuous for him even to frame the idea of appropriating her, and a sort of blasphemy to suppose that she could possibly give herself to him."

What would it be for Daniel Deronda to entertain such thoughts? He was not one who could quite naïvely introduce himself where he had just excluded his friend, yet it was undeniable that what had just happened made a new stage in his feeling towards Mirah. But apart from other grounds for self-repression, reasons both definite and vague made him shut away that question as he might have shut up a half-opened writing that would have carried his imagination too far and given too much shape to presentiments. Might there not come a disclosure which would hold the missing determination of his

course? What did he really know about his origin? Strangely in these latter months when it seemed right that he should exert his will in the choice of a destination, the passion of his nature had got more and more locked by this uncertainty. The disclosure might bring its pain, indeed the likelihood seemed to him to be all on that side; but if it helped him to make his life a sequence which would take the form of duty, — if it saved him from having to make an arbitrary selection where he felt no preponderance of desire? Still more he wanted to escape standing as a critic outside the activities of men, stiffened into the ridiculous attitude of self-assigned superiority. His chief tether was his early inwrought affection for Sir Hugo, making him gratefully deferential to wishes with which he had little agreement; but gratitude had been sometimes disturbed by doubts which were near reducing it to a fear of being ungrateful. Many of us complain that half our birthright is sharp duty: Deronda was more inclined to complain that he was robbed of this half; yet he accused himself, as he would have accused another, of being weakly self-conscious and wanting in resolve. He was the reverse of that type painted for us in Faulconbridge and Edmund of Gloster, whose coarse ambition for personal success is inflamed by a defiance of accidental disadvantages. To Daniel the words Father and Mother had the altar-fire in them; and the thought of all closest relations of our nature held still something of the mystic power which had made his neck and ears burn in boyhood. The average man may regard this sensibility on the question of birth as

preposterous and hardly credible; but with the utmost respect for his knowledge as the rock from which all other knowledge is hewn, it must be admitted that many well-proved facts are dark to the average man, even concerning the action of his own heart and the structure of his own retina. A century ago he and all his forefathers had not had the slightest notion of that electric discharge by means of which they had all wagged their tongues mistakenly; any more than they were awake to the secluded anguish of exceptional sensitiveness into which many a carelessly begotten child of man is born.

Perhaps the ferment was all the stronger in Deronda's mind because he had never had a confidant to whom he could open himself on these delicate subjects. He had always been leaned on instead of being invited to lean. Sometimes he had longed for the sort of friend to whom he might possibly unfold his experience: a young man like himself who sustained a private grief and was not too confident about his own career; speculative enough to understand every moral difficulty, yet socially susceptible, as he himself was, and having every outward sign of equality either in bodily or spiritual wrestling, — for he had found it impossible to reciprocate confidences with one who looked up to him. But he had no expectation of meeting the friend he imagined. Deronda's was not one of those quiveringly poised natures that lend themselves to second-sight.

CHAPTER IV

"There be who hold that the deeper tragedy were a Prometheus Bound not *after* but *before* he had well got the celestial fire into the νάρθηξ whereby it might be conveyed to mortals: thrust by the Kratos and Bia of instituted methods into a solitude of despised ideas, fastened in throbbing helplessness by the fatal pressure of poverty and disease, — a solitude where many pass by, but none regard."

"SECOND-SIGHT" is a flag over disputed ground. But it is matter of knowledge that there are persons whose yearnings, conceptions, — nay, travelled conclusions, — continually take the form of images which have a foreshadowing power: the deed they would do starts up before them in complete shape, making a coercive type; the event they hunger for or dread rises into vision with a seed-like growth, feeding itself fast on unnumbered impressions. They are not always the less capable of the argumentative process, nor less sane than the commonplace calculators of the market: sometimes it may be that their natures have manifold openings, like the hundred-gated Thebes, where there may naturally be a greater and more miscellaneous inrush than through a narrow beadle-watched portal. No doubt there are abject specimens of the visionary, as there is a minim mammal which you might imprison in the finger of your glove. That small relative of the elephant has no harm in him; but what great mental or social type is free from specimens whose insignificance is both ugly and noxious? One is afraid to think of all that the genus "patriot" embraces; or of the elbowing there might

be at the day of judgment for those who ranked as authors, and brought volumes either in their hands or on trucks.

This apology for inevitable kinship is meant to usher in some facts about Mordecai, whose figure had bitten itself into Deronda's mind as a new question which he felt an interest in getting answered. But the interest was no more than a vaguely expectant suspense: the consumptive-looking Jew, apparently a fervid student of some kind, getting his crust by a quiet handicraft, like Spinoza, fitted into none of Deronda's anticipations.

It was otherwise with the effect of their meeting on Mordecai. For many winters, while he had been conscious of an ebbing physical life and a widening spiritual loneliness, all his passionate desire had concentred itself in the yearning for some young ear into which he could pour his mind as a testament, some soul kindred enough to accept the spiritual product of his own brief, painful life, as a mission to be executed. It was remarkable that the hopefulness which is often the beneficent illusion of consumptive patients, was in Mordecai wholly diverted from the prospect of bodily recovery and carried into the current of this yearning for transmission. The yearning, which had panted upward from out of overwhelming discouragements, had grown into a hope, — the hope into a confident belief, which, instead of being checked by the clear conception he had of his hastening decline, took rather the intensity of expectant faith in a prophecy which has only brief space to get fulfilled in.

Some years had now gone since he had first

begun to measure men with a keen glance searching for a possibility which became more and more a distinct conception. Such distinctness as it had at first was reached chiefly by a method of contrast: he wanted to find a man who differed from himself. Tracing reasons in that self for the rebuffs he had met with and the hindrances that beset him, he imagined a man who would have all the elements necessary for sympathy with him, but in an embodiment unlike his own: he must be a Jew, intellectually cultured, morally fervid — in all this a nature ready to be plenished from Mordecai's; but his face and frame must be beautiful and strong, he must have been used to all the refinements of social life, his voice must flow with a full and easy current, his circumstances be free from sordid need; he must glorify the possibilities of the Jew, not sit and wander as Mordecai did, bearing the stamp of his people amid the signs of poverty and waning breath. Sensitive to physical characteristics, he had, both abroad and in England, looked at pictures as well as men, and in a vacant hour he had sometimes lingered in the National Gallery in search of paintings which might feed his hopefulness with grave and noble types of the human form, such as might well belong to men of his own race. But he returned in disappointment. The instances are scattered but thinly over the galleries of Europe, in which the fortune or selection even of the chief masters has given to Art a face at once young, grand, and beautiful, where, if there is any melancholy, it is no feeble passivity, but enters into the foreshadowed capability of heroism.

Some observant persons may perhaps remember his emaciated figure, and dark eyes deep in their sockets, as he stood in front of a picture that had touched him either to new or habitual meditation: he commonly wore a cloth cap with black fur round it, which no painter would have asked him to take off. But spectators would be likely to think of him as an odd-looking Jew, who probably got money out of pictures; and Mordecai, when he noticed them, was perfectly aware of the impression he made. Experience had rendered him morbidly alive to the effect of a man's poverty and other physical disadvantages in cheapening his ideas, unless they are those of a Peter the Hermit who has a tocsin for the rabble. But he was too sane and generous to attribute his spiritual banishment solely to the excusable prejudices of others: certain incapacities of his own had made the sentence of exclusion; and hence it was that his imagination had constructed another man who would be something more ample than the second soul bestowed, according to the notion of the Cabalists, to help out the insufficient first, — who would be a blooming human life, ready to incorporate all that was worthiest in an existence whose visible, palpable part was burning itself fast away. His inward need for the conception of this expanded, prolonged self was reflected as an outward necessity. The thoughts of his heart (that ancient phrase best shadows the truth) seemed to him too precious, too closely inwoven with the growth of things not to have a further destiny. And as the more beautiful, the stronger, the more executive self took shape in his mind, he

loved it beforehand with an affection half identifying, half contemplative and grateful.

Mordecai's mind wrought so constantly in images, that his coherent trains of thought often resembled the significant dreams attributed to sleepers by waking persons in their most inventive moments; nay, they often resembled genuine dreams in their way of breaking off the passage from the known to the unknown. Thus, for a long while, he habitually thought of the Being answering to his need as one distantly approaching or turning his back towards him, darkly painted against a golden sky. The reason of the golden sky lay in one of Mordecai's habits. He was keenly alive to some poetic aspects of London; and a favourite resort of his, when strength and leisure allowed, was to some one of the bridges, especially about sunrise or sunset. Even when he was bending over watch-wheels and trinkets, or seated in a small upper room looking out on dingy bricks and dingy cracked windows, his imagination spontaneously planted him on some spot where he had a far-stretching scene; his thought went on in wide spaces; and whenever he could, he tried to have in reality the influences of a large sky. Leaning on the parapet of Blackfriars Bridge, and gazing meditatively, the breadth and calm of the river, with its long vista half hazy, half luminous, the grand dim masses or tall forms of buildings which were the signs of world-commerce, the oncoming of boats and barges from the still distance into sound and colour, entered into his mood and blent themselves indistinguishably with his thinking, as a fine symphony to

which we can hardly be said to listen makes a medium that bears up our spiritual wings. Thus it happened that the figure representative of Mordecai's longing was mentally seen darkened by the excess of light in the aerial background. But in the inevitable progress of his imagination towards fuller detail, he ceased to see the figure with its back towards him. It began to advance, and a face became discernible; the words youth, beauty, refinement, Jewish birth, noble gravity, turned into hardly individual but typical form and colour: gathered from his memory of faces seen among the Jews of Holland and Bohemia, and from the paintings which revived that memory. Reverently let it be said of this mature spiritual need that it was akin to the boy's and girl's picturing of the future beloved; but the stirrings of such young desire are feeble compared with the passionate current of an ideal life straining to embody itself, made intense by resistance to imminent dissolution. The visionary form became a companion and auditor; keeping a place not only in the waking imagination, but in those dreams of lighter slumber of which it is truest to say, " I sleep, but my heart waketh " — when the disturbing trivial story of yesterday is charged with the impassioned purpose of years.

Of late the urgency of irredeemable time, measured by the gradual choking of life, had turned Mordecai's trust into an agitated watch for the fulfilment that must be at hand. Was the bell on the verge of tolling, the sentence about to be executed? The deliverer's footstep must be near, — the deliverer who was to rescue

Mordecai's spiritual travail from oblivion, and give it an abiding place in the best heritage of his people. An insane exaggeration of his own value, even if his ideas had been as true and precious as those of Columbus or Newton, many would have counted this yearning, taking it as the sublimer part for a man to say, "If not I, then another," and to hold cheap the meaning of his own life. But the fuller nature desires to be an agent, to create, and not merely to look on: strong love hungers to bless, and not merely to behold blessing. And while there is warmth enough in the sun to feed an energetic life, there will still be men to feel, "I am lord of this moment's change, and will charge it with my soul."

But with that mingling of inconsequence which belongs to us all, and not unhappily, since it saves us from many effects of mistake, Mordecai's confidence in the friend to come did not suffice to make him passive, and he tried expedients, pathetically humble, such as happened to be within his reach, for communicating something of himself. It was now two years since he had taken up his abode under Ezra Cohen's roof, where he was regarded with much good-will as a compound of workman, dominie, vessel of charity, inspired idiot, man of piety, and (if he were inquired into) dangerous heretic. During that time little Jacob had advanced into knickerbockers, and into that quickness of apprehension which has been already made manifest in relation to hardware and exchange. He had also advanced in attachment to Mordecai, regarding him as an inferior, but liking him

none the worse, and taking his helpful cleverness as he might have taken the services of an enslaved Djinn. As for Mordecai, he had given Jacob his first lessons, and his habitual tenderness easily turned into the teacher's fatherhood. Though he was fully conscious of the spiritual distance between the parents and himself, and would never have attempted any communication to them from his peculiar world, the boy moved him with that idealizing affection which merges the qualities of the individual child in the glory of childhood and the possibilities of a long future. And this feeling had drawn him on, at first without premeditation, and afterwards with conscious purpose, to a sort of outpouring in the ear of the boy which might have seemed wild enough to any excellent man of business who overheard it. But none overheard when Jacob went up to Mordecai's room on a day, for example, in which there was little work to be done, or at an hour when the work was ended, and after a brief lesson in English reading or in numeration, was induced to remain standing at his teacher's knees, or chose to jump astride them, often to the patient fatigue of the wasted limbs. The inducement was perhaps the mending of a toy, or some little mechanical device in which Mordecai's well-practised finger-tips had an exceptional skill; and with the boy thus tethered, he would begin to repeat a Hebrew poem of his own, into which years before he had poured his first youthful ardours for that conception of a blended past and future which was the mistress of his soul, telling Jacob to say the words after him.

"The boy will get them engraved within him," thought Mordecai; "it is a way of printing."

None readier than Jacob at this fascinating game of imitating unintelligible words; and if no opposing diversion occurred, he would sometimes carry on his share in it as long as the teacher's breath would last out. For Mordecai threw into each repetition the fervour befitting a sacred occasion. In such instances Jacob would show no other distraction than reaching out and surveying the contents of his pockets; or drawing down the skin of his cheeks to make his eyes look awful, and rolling his head to complete the effect; or alternately handling his own nose and Mordecai's, as if to test the relation of their masses. Under all this the fervid reciter would not pause, satisfied if the young organs of speech would submit themselves. But most commonly a sudden impulse sent Jacob leaping away into some antic or active amusement, when, instead of following the recitation, he would return upon the foregoing words most ready to his tongue, and mouth or gabble, with a see-saw suited to the action of his limbs, a verse on which Mordecai had spent some of his too scanty heart's blood. Yet he waited with such patience as a prophet needs, and began his strange printing again undiscouraged on the morrow, saying inwardly, —

"My words may rule him some day. Their meaning may flash out on him. It is so with a nation, — after many days."

Meanwhile Jacob's sense of power was increased and his time enlivened by a store of magical articulation with which he made the

baby crow, or drove the large cat into a dark corner, or promised himself to frighten any incidental Christian of his own years. One week he had unfortunately seen a street mountebank, and this carried off his muscular imitativeness in sad divergence from New Hebrew poetry after the model of Jehuda ha-Levi. Mordecai had arrived at a fresh passage in his poem; for as soon as Jacob had got well used to one portion, he was led on to another, and a fresh combination of sounds generally answered better in keeping him fast for a few minutes. The consumptive voice, originally a strong high barytone with its variously mingling hoarseness, like a haze amidst illuminations, and its occasional incipient gasp, had more than the usual excitement, while it gave forth Hebrew verses with a meaning something like this: —

"Away from me the garment of forgetfulness,
Withering the heart;
The oil and wine from presses of the Goyim,
Poisoned with scorn.
Solitude is on the sides of Mount Nebo,
In its heart a tomb:
There the buried ark and golden cherubim
Make hidden light:
There the solemn faces gaze unchanged,
The wings are spread unbroken:
Shut beneath in silent awful speech
The Law lies graven.
Solitude and darkness are my covering,
And my heart a tomb;
Smite and shatter it, O Gabriel!
Shatter it as the clay of the founder
Around the golden image."

In the absorbing enthusiasm with which Mordecai had intoned rather than spoken this last invocation, he was unconscious that Jacob had ceased to follow him and had started away from

his knees; but pausing he saw, as by a sudden flash, that the lad had thrown himself on his hands with his feet in the air, mountebank fashion, and was picking up with his lips a bright farthing which was a favourite among his pocket treasures. This might have been reckoned among the tricks Mordecai was used to, but at this moment it jarred him horribly, as if it had been a Satanic grin upon his prayer.

"Child! child!" he called out with a strange cry that startled Jacob to his feet, and then he sank backward with a shudder, closing his eyes.

"What?" said Jacob, quickly. Then not getting an immediate answer, he pressed Mordecai's knees with a shaking movement, in order to rouse him. Mordecai opened his eyes with a fierce expression in them, leaned forward, grasped the little shoulders, and said in a quick, hoarse whisper, —

"A curse is on your generation, child. They will open the mountain and drag forth the golden wings and coin them into money, and the solemn faces they will break up into earrings for wanton women! And they shall get themselves a new name, but the angel of ignominy, with the fiery brand, shall know them, and their heart shall be the tomb of dead desires that turn their life to rottenness."

The aspect and action of Mordecai were so new and mysterious to Jacob — they carried such a burthen of obscure threat — it was as if the patient, indulgent companion had turned into something unknown and terrific: the sunken dark eyes and hoarse accents close to him, the thin grappling fingers, shook Jacob's little frame

into awe, and while Mordecai was speaking he stood trembling with a sense that the house was tumbling in and they were not going to have dinner any more. But when the terrible speech had ended and the pinch was relaxed, the shock resolved itself into tears; Jacob lifted up his small patriarchal countenance and wept aloud. This sign of childish grief at once recalled Mordecai to his usual gentle self: he was not able to speak again at present, but with a maternal action he drew the curly head towards him and pressed it tenderly against his breast. On this Jacob, feeling the danger well-nigh over, howled at ease, beginning to imitate his own performance and improve upon it, — a sort of transition from impulse into art often observable. Indeed, the next day he undertook to terrify Adelaide Rebekah in like manner, and succeeded very well.

But Mordecai suffered a check which lasted long, from the consciousness of a misapplied agitation; sane as well as excitable, he judged severely his moments of aberration into futile eagerness, and felt discredited with himself. All the more his mind was strained towards the discernment of that friend to come, with whom he would have a calm certainty of fellowship and understanding.

It was just then that, in his usual mid-day guardianship of the old book-shop, he was struck by the appearance of Deronda, and it is perhaps comprehensible now why Mordecai's glance took on a sudden eager interest as he looked at the new-comer: he saw a face and frame which seemed to him to realize the long-conceived type. But the disclaimer of Jewish birth was for the

moment a backward thrust of double severity, the particular disappointment tending to shake his confidence in the more indefinite expectation. Nevertheless, when he found Deronda seated at the Cohens' table, the disclaimer was for the moment nullified: the first impression returned with added force, seeming to be guaranteed by this second meeting under circumstances more peculiar than the former; and in asking Deronda if he knew Hebrew, Mordecai was so possessed by the new inrush of belief, that he had forgotten the absence of any other condition to the fulfilment of his hopes. But the answering "No" struck them all down again, and the frustration was more painful than before. After turning his back on the visitor that Sabbath evening, Mordecai went through days of a deep discouragement, like that of men on a doomed ship, who, having strained their eyes after a sail, and beheld it with rejoicing, behold it never advance, and say, "Our sick eyes make it." But the long-contemplated figure had come as an emotional sequence of Mordecai's firmest theoretic convictions; it had been wrought from the imagery of his most passionate life; and it inevitably reappeared, — reappeared in a more specific self-asserting form than ever. Deronda had that sort of resemblance to the preconceived type which a finely individual bust or portrait has to the more generalized copy left in our minds after a long interval: we renew our memory with delight, but we hardly know with how much correction. And now his face met Mordecai's inward gaze as if it had always belonged to the awaited friend, raying out, more-

over, some of that influence which belongs to breathing flesh; till by and by it seemed that discouragement had turned into a new obstinacy of resistance, and the ever-recurrent vision had the force of an outward call to disregard counter-evidence, and keep expectation awake. It was Deronda now who was seen in the often painful night-watches, when we are all liable to be held with the clutch of a single thought, — whose figure, never with its back turned, was seen in moments of soothed reverie or soothed dozing, painted on that golden sky which was the doubly blessed symbol of advancing day and of approaching rest.

Mordecai knew that the nameless stranger was to come and redeem his ring; and in spite of contrary chances, the wish to see him again was growing into a belief that he should see him. In the January weeks, he felt an increasing agitation of that subdued hidden quality which hinders nervous people from any steady occupation on the eve of an anticipated change. He could not go on with his printing of Hebrew on little Jacob's mind; or with his attendance at a weekly club, which was another effort of the same forlorn hope: something else was coming. The one thing he longed for was to get as far as the river, which he could do but seldom and with difficulty. He yearned with a poet's yearning for the wide sky, the far-reaching vista of bridges, the tender and fluctuating lights on the water which seems to breathe with a life that can shiver and mourn, be comforted and rejoice.

CHAPTER V

Vor den Wissenden sich stellen
Sicher ist's in allen Fällen!
Wenn du lange dich gequälet
Weiss er gleich wo dir es fehlet;
Auch auf Beifall darfst du hoffen,
Denn er weiss wo du's getroffen.

GOETHE: *West-östlicher Divan.*

MOMENTOUS things happened to Deronda the very evening of that visit to the small house at Chelsea, when there was the discussion about Mirah's public name. But for the family group there, what appeared to be the chief sequence connected with it occurred two days afterwards. About four o'clock wheels paused before the door, and there came one of those knocks with an accompanying ring which serve to magnify the sense of social existence in a region where the most enlivening signals are usually those of the muffin-man. All the girls were at home, and the two rooms were thrown together to make space for Kate's drawing, as well as a great length of embroidery which had taken the place of the satin cushions, — a sort of *pièce de résistance* in the courses of needlework, taken up by any clever fingers that happened to be at liberty. It stretched across the front room picturesquely enough, Mrs. Meyrick bending over it at one corner, Mab in the middle, and Amy at the other end. Mirah, whose performances in point of sewing were on the makeshift level of the tailor-bird's, her

education in that branch having been much neglected, was acting as reader to the party, seated on a camp-stool; in which position she also served Kate as model for a titlepage vignette, symbolizing a fair public absorbed in the successive volumes of the Family Tea-table. She was giving forth with charming distinctness the delightful Essay of Elia, "The Praise of Chimney-Sweeps," and all were smiling over the "innocent blacknesses," when the imposing knock and ring called their thoughts to loftier spheres, and they looked up in wonderment.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Meyrick; "can it be Lady Mallinger? Is there a grand carriage, Amy?"

"No, — only a handsome cab. It must be a gentleman."

"The Prime Minister, I should think," said Kate, dryly. "Hans says the greatest man in London may get into a handsome cab."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Mab. "Suppose it should be Lord Russell!"

The five bright faces were all looking amused when the old maid-servant bringing in a card distractedly left the parlour door open, and there was seen bowing towards Mrs. Meyrick a figure quite unlike that of the respected Premier, — tall and physically impressive even in his kid and kerseymere, with massive face, flamboyant hair, and gold spectacles: in fact, as Mrs. Meyrick saw from the card, *Julius Klesmer*.

Even embarrassment could hardly have made the "little mother" awkward, but quick in her perceptions she was at once aware of the situa-

tion, and felt well satisfied that the great personage had come to Mirah instead of requiring her to come to him; taking it as a sign of active interest. But when he entered, the rooms shrank into closets, the cottage piano, Mab thought, seemed a ridiculous toy, and the entire family existence as petty and private as an establishment of mice in the Tuileries. Klesmer's personality, especially his way of glancing round him, immediately suggested vast areas and a multitudinous audience, and probably they made the usual scenery of his consciousness, for we all of us carry on our thinking in some habitual *locus* where there is a presence of other souls, and those who take in a larger sweep than their neighbours are apt to seem mightily vain and affected. Klesmer was vain, but not more so than many contemporaries of heavy aspect, whose vanity leaps out and startles one like a spear out of a walking-stick; as to his carriage and gestures, these were as natural to him as the length of his fingers; and the rankest affectation he could have shown would have been to look diffident and demure. While his grandiose air was making Mab feel herself a ridiculous toy to match the cottage piano, he was taking in the details around him with a keen and thoroughly kind sensibility. He remembered a home no larger than this on the outskirts of Bohemia; and in the figurative Bohemia too he had had large acquaintance with the variety and romance which belong to small incomes. He addressed Mrs. Meyrick with the utmost deference.

"I hope I have not taken too great a freedom. Being in the neighbourhood, I ventured

to save time by calling. Our friend Mr. Deronda mentioned to me an understanding that I was to have the honour of becoming acquainted with a young lady here, — Miss Lapidoth."

Klesmer had really discerned Mirah in the first moment of entering, but with subtle politeness he looked round bowingly at the three sisters, as if he were uncertain which was the young lady in question.

"Those are my daughters: this is Miss Lapidoth," said Mrs. Meyrick, waving her hand towards Mirah.

"Ah," said Klesmer, in a tone of gratified expectation, turning a radiant smile and deep bow to Mirah, who, instead of being in the least taken by surprise, had a calm pleasure in her face. She liked the look of Klesmer, feeling sure that he would scold her, like a great musician and a kind man.

"You will not object to beginning our acquaintance by singing to me," he added, aware that they would all be relieved by getting rid of preliminaries.

"I shall be very glad. It is good of you to be willing to listen to me," said Mirah, moving to the piano. "Shall I accompany myself?"

"By all means," said Klesmer, seating himself, at Mrs. Meyrick's invitation, where he could have a good view of the singer. The acute little mother would not have acknowledged the weakness, but she really said to herself, "He will like her singing better if he sees her."

All the feminine hearts except Mirah's were

beating fast with anxiety, thinking Klesmer terrific as he sat with his listening frown on, and only daring to look at him furtively. If he did say anything severe, it would be so hard for them all. They could only comfort themselves with thinking that Prince Camaralzaman, who had heard the finest things, preferred Mirah's singing to any other: also she appeared to be doing her very best, as if she were more instead of less at ease than usual.

The song she had chosen was a fine setting of some words selected from Leopardi's grand Ode to Italy: —

"O patria mia, vedo le mura e gli archi
E le colonne e i simulacri e l'erme
Torri degli avi nostri" —

This was recitative; then followed, —

"Ma la gloria non vedo," —

a mournful melody, a rhythmic plaint. After this came a climax of devout triumph, — passing from the subdued adoration of a happy Andante in the words, —

"Beatissimi voi,
Che offriste il petto alle nemiche lance
Per amor di costei che al sol vi diede," —

to the joyous outburst of an exultant Allegro in —

"Oh viva, oh viva:
Beatissimi voi
Mentre nel mondo si favelli o scriva."

When she had ended, Klesmer said after a moment,

" That is Joseph Leo's music."

"Yes, he was my last master, — at Vienna: so fierce and so good," said Mirah, with a melancholy smile. "He prophesied that my voice would not do for the stage. And he was right."

"*Con*tinue, if you please," said Klesmer, putting out his lips and shaking his long fingers, while he went on with a smothered articulation quite unintelligible to the audience.

The three girls detested him unanimously for not saying one word of praise. Mrs. Meyrick was a little alarmed.

Mirah, simply bent on doing what Klesmer desired, and imagining that he would now like to hear her sing some German, went through Prince Radzivill's music to Gretchen's songs in the "Faust," one after the other, without any interrogatory pause. When she had finished he rose and walked to the extremity of the small space at command, then walked back to the piano, where Mirah had risen from her seat and stood looking towards him with her little hands crossed before her, meekly awaiting judgment; then with a sudden unknitting of his brow and with beaming eyes, he put out his hand and said abruptly, "Let us shake hands: you are a musician."

Mab felt herself beginning to cry, and all the three girls held Klesmer adorable. Mrs. Meyrick took a long breath.

But straightway the frown came again, the long hand, back uppermost, was stretched out in quite a different sense to touch with fingertip the back of Mirah's, and with protruded lip he said, —

"Not for great tasks. No high roofs. We

are no skylarks. We must be modest." Klesmer paused here. And Mab ceased to think him adorable: "As if Mirah had shown the least sign of conceit!"

Mirah was silent, knowing that there was a specific opinion to be waited for, and Klesmer presently went on, —

"I would not advise — I would not further your singing in any larger space than a private drawing-room. But you will do there. And here in London that is one of the best careers open. Lessons will follow. Will you come and sing at a private concert at my house on Wednesday?"

"Oh, I shall be grateful," said Mirah, putting her hands together devoutly. "I would rather get my bread in that way than by anything more public. I will try to improve. What should I work at most?"

Klesmer made a preliminary answer in noises which sounded like words bitten in two and swallowed before they were half out, shaking his fingers the while, before he said, quite distinctly, "I shall introduce you to Astorga; he is the foster-father of good singing, and will give you advice." Then addressing Mrs. Meyrick, he added, "Mrs. Klesmer will call before Wednesday, with your permission."

"We shall feel that to be a great kindness," said Mrs. Meyrick.

"You will sing to her," said Klesmer, turning again to Mirah. "She is a thorough musician, and has a soul with more ears to it than you will often get in a musician. Your singing will satisfy her: —

'Vor den Wissenden sich stellen:'

you know the rest?"

"'Sicher ist's in allen Fällen,'"

said Mirah, promptly. And Klesmer, saying "Schön!" put out his hand again as a good-bye.

He had certainly chosen the most delicate way of praising Mirah, and the Meyrick girls had now given him all their esteem. But imagine Mab's feeling when, suddenly fixing his eyes on her, he said decisively, "That young lady is musical, I see!" She was a mere blush and sense of scorching.

"Yes," said Mirah, on her behalf. "And she has a touch."

"Oh, please, Mirah, — a scramble, not a touch," said Mab, in anguish, with a horrible fear of what the next thing might be: this dreadfully divining personage — evidently Satan in gray trousers — might order her to sit down to the piano, and her heart was like molten wax in the midst of her. But this was cheap payment for her amazed joy when Klesmer said benignantly, turning to Mrs. Meyrick, "Will she like to accompany Miss Lapidoth and hear the music on Wednesday?"

"There could hardly be a greater pleasure for her," said Mrs. Meyrick. "She will be most glad and grateful."

Thereupon Klesmer bowed round to the three sisters more grandly than they had ever been bowed to before. Altogether it was an amusing picture, — the little room with so much of its diagonal taken up in Klesmer's magnificent

bend to the small feminine figures like images a little less than life-size, the grave Holbein faces on the walls, as many as were not otherwise occupied, looking hard at this stranger who by his face seemed a dignified contemporary of their own, but whose garments seemed a deplorable mockery of the human form.

Mrs. Meyrick could not help going out of the room with Klesmer and closing the door behind her. He understood her, and said with a frowning nod: "She will do: if she does n't attempt too much and her voice holds out, she can make an income. I know that is the great point: Deronda told me. You are taking care of her. She looks like a good girl."

"She is an angel," said the warm-hearted woman.

"No," said Klesmer, with a playful nod; "she is a pretty Jewess: the angels must not get the credit of her. But I think she has found a guardian angel," he ended, bowing himself out in this amiable way.

The four young creatures had looked at each other mutely till the door banged and Mrs. Meyrick re-entered. Then there was an explosion. Mab clapped her hands and danced everywhere inconveniently; Mrs. Meyrick kissed Mirah and blessed her; Amy said emphatically, "We can never get her a new dress before Wednesday!" and Kate exclaimed, "Thank heaven, my table is not knocked over!"

Mirah had reseated herself on the music-stool without speaking, and the tears were rolling down her cheeks as she looked at her friends.

"Now, now, Mab!" said Mrs. Meyrick;

"come and sit down reasonably and let us talk."

"Yes, let us talk," said Mab, cordially, coming back to her low seat and caressing her knees. "I am beginning to feel large again. Hans said he was coming this afternoon. I wish he had been here — only there would have been no room for him. Mirah, what are you looking sad for?"

"I am too happy," said Mirah. "I feel so full of gratitude to you all; and he was so very kind."

"Yes, at last," said Mab, sharply. "But he might have said something encouraging sooner. I thought him dreadfully ugly when he sat frowning, and only said, '*Con*tinue.' I hated him all the long way from the top of his hair to the toe of his polished boot."

"Nonsense, Mab; he has a splendid profile," said Kate.

"*Now,* but not *then.* I cannot bear people to keep their minds bottled up for the sake of letting them off with a pop. They seem to grudge making you happy unless they can make you miserable beforehand. However, I forgive him everything," said Mab, with a magnanimous air, "because he has invited me. I wonder why he fixed on me as the musical one? Was it because I have a bulging forehead, ma, and peep from under it like a newt from under a stone?"

"It was your way of listening to the singing, child," said Mrs. Meyrick. "He has magic spectacles, and sees everything through them, depend upon it. But what was that German quotation you were so ready with, Mirah, — you learned puss?"

"Oh, that was not learning," said Mirah, her tearful face breaking into an amused smile. "I said it so many times for a lesson. It means that it is safer to do anything — singing or anything else — before those who know and understand all about it."

"That was why you were not one bit frightened, I suppose," said Amy. "But now, what we have to talk about is a dress for you on Wednesday."

"I don't want anything better than this black merino," said Mirah, rising to show the effect. "Some white gloves and some new *bottines*." She put out her little foot, clad in the famous felt slipper.

"There comes Hans," said Mrs. Meyrick. "Stand still, and let us hear what he says about the dress. Artists are the best people to consult about such things."

"You don't consult me, ma," said Kate, lifting up her eyebrow with a playful complainingness. "I notice mothers are like the people I deal with, — the girls' doings are always priced low."

"My dear child, the boys are such a trouble, — we could never put up with them, if we did n't make believe they were worth more," said Mrs. Meyrick, just as her boy entered. "Hans, we want your opinion about Mirah's dress. A great event has happened. Klesmer has been here, and she is going to sing at his house on Wednesday among grand people. She thinks this dress will do."

"Let me see," said Hans. Mirah in her childlike way turned towards him to be looked at;

and he, going to a little further distance, knelt with one knee on a hassock to survey her.

"This would be thought a very good stage-dress for me," she said pleadingly, "in a part where I was to come on as a poor Jewess and sing to fashionable Christians."

"It would be effective," said Hans, with a considering air; "it would stand out well among the fashionable *chiffons*."

"But you ought not to claim all the poverty on your side, Mirah," said Amy. "There are plenty of poor Christians and dreadfully rich Jews and fashionable Jewesses."

"I did n't mean any harm," said Mirah. "Only I have been used to thinking about my dress for parts in plays. And I almost always had a part with a plain dress."

"That makes me think it questionable," said Hans, who had suddenly become as fastidious and conventional on this occasion as he had thought Deronda was, apropos of the Berenice-pictures. "It looks a little too theatrical. We must not make you a *rôle* of the poor Jewess, — or of being a Jewess at all." Hans had a secret desire to neutralize the Jewess in private life, which he was in danger of not keeping secret.

"But it is what I am really. I am not pretending anything. I shall never be anything else," said Mirah. "I always feel myself a Jewess."

"But we can't feel that about you," said Hans, with a devout look. "What does it signify whether a perfect woman is a Jewess or not?"

"That is your kind way of praising me; I

never was praised so before," said Mirah, with a smile, which was rather maddening to Hans, and made him feel still more of a cosmopolitan.

"People don't think of me as a British Christian," he said, his face creasing merrily. "They think of me as an imperfectly handsome young man and an unpromising painter."

"But you are wandering from the dress," said Amy. "If that will not do, how are we to get another before Wednesday? and to-morrow Sunday?"

"Indeed this will do," said Mirah, entreatingly. "It is all real, you know," — here she looked at Hans, — "even if it seemed theatrical. Poor Berenice sitting on the ruins, — any one might say that was theatrical, but I know that is just what she would do."

"I am a scoundrel," said Hans, overcome by this misplaced trust. "That is my invention. Nobody knows that she did that. Shall you forgive me for not saying so before?"

"Oh, yes," said Mirah, after a momentary pause of surprise. "You knew it was what she would be sure to do, — a Jewess who had not been faithful, — who had done what she did and was penitent. She could have no joy but to afflict herself; and where else would she go? I think it is very beautiful that you should enter so into what a Jewess would feel."

"The Jewesses of that time sat on ruins," said Hans, starting up with a sense of being checkmated. "That makes them convenient for pictures."

"But the dress, — the dress," said Amy; "is it settled?"

"Yes; is it not?" said Mirah, looking doubtfully at Mrs. Meyrick, who in her turn looked up at her son, and said, "What do you think, Hans?"

"That dress will not do," said Hans, decisively. "She is not going to sit on ruins. You must jump into a cab with her, little mother, and go to Regent Street. It 's plenty of time to get anything you like, — a black silk dress such as ladies wear. She must not be taken for an object of charity. She has talents to make people indebted to her."

"I think it is what Mr. Deronda would like, — for her to have a handsome dress," said Mrs. Meyrick, deliberating.

"Of course it is," said Hans, with some sharpness. "You may take my word for what a gentleman would feel."

"I wish to do what Mr. Deronda would like me to do," said Mirah, gravely, seeing that Mrs. Meyrick looked towards her; and Hans, turning on his heel, went to Kate's table and took up one of her drawings, as if his interest needed a new direction.

"Should n't you like to make a study of Klesmer's head, Hans?" said Kate. "I suppose you have often seen him?"

"Seen him!" exclaimed Hans, immediately throwing back his head and mane, seating himself at the piano and looking round him as if he were surveying an amphitheatre, while he held his fingers down perpendicularly towards the keys. But then in another instant he wheeled round on the stool, looked at Mirah and said, half timidly, "Perhaps you don't like this mim-

icry; you must always stop my nonsense when you don't like it."

Mirah had been smiling at the swiftly made image, and she smiled still, but with a touch of something else than amusement, as she said: "Thank you. But you have never done anything I did not like. I hardly think he could, belonging to you," she added, looking at Mrs. Meyrick.

In this way Hans got food for his hope. How could the rose help it when several bees in succession took its sweet odour as a sign of personal attachment?

CHAPTER VI

> Within the soul a faculty abides,
> That with interpositions, which would hide
> And darken, so can deal, that they become
> Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
> Her native brightness, as the ample moon,
> In the deep stillness of a summer even,
> Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
> Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
> In the green trees; and, kindling on all sides
> Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
> Into a substance glorious as her own,
> Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
> Capacious and serene.
>
> WORDSWORTH: *Excursion*, B. IV.

DERONDA came out of the narrow house at Chelsea in a frame of mind that made him long for some good bodily exercise to carry off what he was himself inclined to call the fumes of his temper. He was going towards the city, and the sight of the Chelsea Stairs with the waiting boats at once determined him to avoid the irritating inaction of being driven in a cab, by calling a wherry and taking an oar.

His errand was to go to Ram's book-shop, where he had yesterday arrived too late for Mordecai's mid-day watch, and had been told that he invariably came there again between five and six. Some further acquaintance with this remarkable inmate of the Cohens was particularly desired by Deronda as a preliminary to redeeming his ring: he wished that their conversation should not again end speedily with that drop of Mordecai's interest which was like the removal of a drawbridge, and threatened to shut out any

easy communication in future. As he got warmed with the use of the oar, fixing his mind on the errand before him and the ends he wanted to achieve on Mirah's account, he experienced, as was wont with him, a quick change of mental light, shifting his point of view to that of the person whom he had been thinking of hitherto chiefly as serviceable to his own purposes, and was inclined to taunt himself with being not much better than an enlisting sergeant, who never troubles himself with the drama that brings him the needful recruits.

"I suppose if I got from this man the information I am most anxious about," thought Deronda, "I should be contented enough if he felt no disposition to tell me more of himself, or why he seemed to have some expectation from me which was disappointed. The sort of curiosity he stirs would die out; and yet it might be that he had neared and parted as one can imagine two ships doing, each freighted with an exile who would have recognized the other if the two could have looked out face to face. Not that there is any likelihood of a peculiar tie between me and this poor fellow, whose voyage, I fancy, must soon be over. But I wonder whether there is much of that momentous mutual missing between people who interchange blank looks, or even long for one another's absence in a crowded place. However, one makes one's self chances of missing by going on the recruiting-sergeant's plan."

When the wherry was approaching Blackfriars Bridge, where Deronda meant to land, it was half-past four, and the gray day was

dying gloriously, its western clouds all broken into narrowing purple strata before a wide-spreading saffron clearness, which in the sky had a monumental calm, but on the river, with its changing objects, was reflected as a luminous movement, the alternate flash of ripples or currents, the sudden glow of the brown sail, the passage of laden barges from blackness into colour, making an active response to that brooding glory.

Feeling well heated by this time, Deronda gave up the oar and drew over him again his Inverness cape. As he lifted up his head while fastening the topmost button, his eyes caught a well-remembered face looking towards him over the parapet of the bridge, — brought out by the western light into startling distinctness and brilliancy, — an illuminated type of bodily emaciation and spiritual eagerness. It was the face of Mordecai, who also, in his watch towards the west, had caught sight of the advancing boat, and had kept it fast within his gaze, at first simply because it was advancing, then with a recovery of impressions that made him quiver as with a presentiment, till at last the nearing figure lifted up its face towards him — the face of his visions — and then immediately, with white uplifted hand, beckoned again and again.

For Deronda, anxious that Mordecai should recognize and await him, had lost no time before signalling, and the answer came straightway. Mordecai lifted his cap and waved it, — feeling in that moment that his inward prophecy was fulfilled. Obstacles, incongruities, all melted into the sense of completion with which his soul was flooded by this outward satisfaction of his

longing. His exultation was not widely different from that of the experimenter, bending over the first stirrings of change that correspond to what in the fervour of concentrated prevision his thought has foreshadowed. The prefigured friend had come from the golden background, and had signalled to him: this actually was: the rest was to be.

In three minutes Deronda had landed, had paid his boatman, and was joining Mordecai, whose instinct it was to stand perfectly still and wait for him.

"I was very glad to see you standing here," said Deronda, "for I was intending to go on to the book-shop and look for you again. I was there yesterday, — perhaps they mentioned it to you."

"Yes," said Mordecai; "that was the reason I came to the bridge."

This answer, made with simple gravity, was startlingly mysterious to Deronda. Were the peculiarities of this man really associated with any sort of mental alienation, according to Cohen's hint?

"You knew nothing of my being at Chelsea?" he said, after a moment.

"No: but I expected you to come down the river. I have been waiting for you these five years." Mordecai's deep-sunk eyes were fixed on those of the friend who had at last arrived with a look of affectionate dependence, at once pathetic and solemn. Deronda's sensitiveness was not the less responsive because he could not but believe that this strangely disclosed relation was founded on an illusion.

"It will be a satisfaction to me if I can be of any real use to you," he answered, very earnestly. "Shall we get into a cab and drive to — wherever you wish to go? You have probably had walking enough with your short breath."

"Let us go to the book-shop. It will soon be time for me to be there. But now look up the river," said Mordecai, turning again towards it, and speaking in undertones of what may be called an excited calm, — so absorbed by a sense of fulfilment that he was conscious of no barrier to a complete understanding between him and Deronda. "See the sky, how it is slowly fading. I have always loved this bridge: I stood on it when I was a little boy. It is a meeting-place for the spiritual messengers. It is true — what the Masters said — that each order of things has its angel: that means the full message of each from what is afar. Here I have listened to the messages of earth and sky; when I was stronger I used to stay and watch for the stars in the deep heavens. But this time just about sunset was always what I loved best. It has sunk into me and dwelt with me, — fading, slowly fading: it was my own decline: it paused, — it waited, till at last it brought me my new life — my new self — who will live when this breath is all breathed out."

Deronda did not speak. He felt himself strangely wrought upon. The first-prompted suspicion that Mordecai might be liable to hallucinations of thought, — might have become a monomaniac on some subject which had given too severe a strain to his diseased organism, —

gave way to a more submissive expectancy. His nature was too large, too ready to conceive regions beyond his own experience, to rest at once in the easy explanation, "madness," whenever a consciousness showed some fulness and conviction where his own was blank. It accorded with his habitual disposition that he should meet rather than resist any claim on him in the shape of another's need; and this claim brought with it a sense of solemnity which seemed a radiation from Mordecai, as utterly nullifying his outward poverty and lifting him into authority as if he had been that preternatural guide seen in the universal legend, who suddenly drops his mean disguise and stands a manifest Power. That impression was the more sanctioned by a sort of resolved quietude which the persuasion of fulfilment had produced in Mordecai's manner. After they had stood a moment in silence he said, "Let us go now;" and when they were walking he added, "We will get down at the end of the street and walk to the shop. You can look at the books, and Mr. Ram will be going away directly and leave us alone."

It seemed that this enthusiast was just as cautious, just as much alive to judgments in other minds as if he had been that antipole of all enthusiasm called "a man of the world."

While they were rattling along in the cab, Mirah was still present with Deronda in the midst of this strange experience, but he foresaw that the course of conversation would be determined by Mordecai, not by himself: he was no

longer confident what questions he should be able to ask; and with a reaction on his own mood, he inwardly said: "I suppose I am in a state of complete superstition, just as if I were awaiting the destiny that could interpret the oracle. But some strong relation there must be between me and this man, since he feels it strongly. Great heaven! what relation has proved itself more potent in the world than faith even when mistaken, — than expectation even when perpetually disappointed? Is my side of the relation to be disappointing or fulfilling? — well, if it is ever possible for me to fulfil, I will not disappoint."

In ten minutes the two men, with as intense a consciousness as if they had been two undeclared lovers, felt themselves alone in the small gas-lit book-shop and turned face to face, each baring his head from an instinctive feeling that they wished to see each other fully. Mordecai came forward to lean his back against the little counter, while Deronda stood against the opposite wall hardly more than four feet off. I wish I could perpetuate those two faces, as Titian's "Tribute Money" has perpetuated two types presenting another sort of contrast. Imagine — we all of us can — the pathetic stamp of consumption with its brilliancy of glance, to which the sharply defined structure of features, reminding one of a forsaken temple, give already a far-off look as of one getting unwillingly out of reach; and imagine it on a Jewish face naturally accentuated for the expression of an eager mind, — the face of a man little above thirty, but with that age upon it which belongs to time length-

ened by suffering, the hair and beard still black throwing out the yellow pallor of the skin, the difficult breathing giving more decided marking to the mobile nostril, the wasted yellow hands conspicuous on the folded arms: then give to the yearning consumptive glance something of the slowly dying mother's look when her one loved son visits her bedside, and the flickering power of gladness leaps out as she says, "My boy!" — for the sense of spiritual perpetuation in another resembles that maternal transference of self.

Seeing such a portrait, you would see Mordecai. And opposite to him was a face not more distinctively oriental than many a type seen among what we call the Latin races: rich in youthful health, and with a forcible masculine gravity in its repose, that gave the value of judgment to the reverence with which he met the gaze of this mysterious son of poverty who claimed him as a long-expected friend. The more exquisite quality of Deronda's nature — that keenly perceptive sympathetic emotiveness which ran along with his speculative tendency — was never more thoroughly tested. He felt nothing that could be called belief in the validity of Mordecai's impressions concerning him, or in the probability of any greatly effective issue: what he felt was a profound sensibility to a cry from the depths of another soul; and accompanying that, the summons to be receptive instead of superciliously prejudging. Receptiveness is a rare and massive power, like fortitude; and this state of mind now gave Deronda's face its utmost expression of calm, benignant force,

— an expression which nourished Mordecai's confidence and made an open way before him. He began to speak.

"You cannot know what has guided me to you and brought us together at this moment. You are wondering."

"I am not impatient," said Deronda. "I am ready to listen to whatever you may wish to disclose."

"You see some of the reasons why I needed you," said Mordecai, speaking quietly, as if he wished to reserve his strength. "You see that I am dying. You see that I am as one shut up behind bars by the wayside, who if he spoke to any would be met only by head-shaking and pity. The day is closing, — the light is fading, — soon we should not have been able to discern each other. But you have come in time."

"I rejoice that I am come in time," said Deronda, feelingly. He would not say, "I hope you are not mistaken in me," — the very word "mistaken," he thought, would be a cruelty at that moment.

"But the hidden reasons why I need you began afar off," said Mordecai; "began in my early years when I was studying in another land. Then ideas, beloved ideas, came to me, because I was a Jew. They were a trust to fulfil, because I was a Jew. They were an inspiration, because I was a Jew, and felt the heart of my race beating within me. They were my life; I was not fully born till then. I counted this heart, and this breath, and this right hand" — Mordecai had pathetically pressed his hand against his breast, and then stretched its wasted

fingers out before him, — " I counted my sleep and my waking, and the work I fed my body with, and the sight that fed my eyes, — I counted them but as fuel to the divine flame. But I had done as one who wanders and engraves his thought in rocky solitudes, and before I could change my course came care and labour and disease, and blocked the way before me, and bound me with the iron that eats itself into the soul. Then I said, ' How shall I save the life within me from being stifled with this stifled breath? ' "

Mordecai paused to rest that poor breath which had been taxed by the rising excitement of his speech. And also he wished to check that excitement. Deronda dared not speak: the very silence in the narrow space seemed alive with mingled awe and compassion before this struggling fervour. And presently Mordecai went on, —

" But you may misunderstand me. I speak not as an ignorant dreamer, — as one bred up in the inland valleys, thinking ancient thoughts anew, and not knowing them ancient, never having stood by the great waters where the world's knowledge passes to and fro. English is my mother-tongue, England is the native land of this body, which is but as a breaking pot of earth around the fruit-bearing tree, whose seed might make the desert rejoice. But my true life was nourished in Holland, at the feet of my mother's brother, a Rabbi skilled in special learning; and when he died I went to Hamburg to study, and afterwards to Göttingen, that I might take a larger outlook on my people and on the Gentile world, and drink knowledge at all sources. I

was a youth; I felt free; I saw our chief seats in Germany; I was not then in utter poverty. And I had possessed myself of a handicraft. For I said, I care not if my lot be as that of Joshua ben Chananja: after the last destruction he earned his bread by making needles, but in his youth he had been a singer on the steps of the Temple, and had a memory of what was, before the glory departed. I said, let my body dwell in poverty, and my hands be as the hands of the toiler; but let my soul be as a temple of remembrance where the treasures of knowledge enter and the inner sanctuary is hope. I knew what I chose. They said, 'He feeds himself on visions,' and I denied not; for visions are the creators and feeders of the world. I see, I measure the world as it is, which the vision will create anew. You are not listening to one who raves aloof from the lives of his fellows."

Mordecai paused; and Deronda, feeling that the pause was expectant, said: "Do me the justice to believe that I was not inclined to call your words raving. I listen that I may know, without prejudgment. I have had experience which gives me a keen interest in the story of a spiritual destiny embraced willingly, and embraced in youth."

"A spiritual destiny embraced willingly — in youth?" Mordecai repeated in a corrective tone. "It was the soul fully born within me, and it came in my boyhood. It brought its own world, — a mediæval world, where there were men who made the ancient language live again in new psalms of exile. They had absorbed the philosophy of the Gentile into the faith of the Jew,

and they still yearned toward a centre for our race. One of their souls was born again within me, and awaked amid the memories of their world. It travelled into Spain and Provence; it debated with Aben-Ezra; it took ship with Jehuda ha-Levi; it heard the roar of the Crusaders and the shrieks of tortured Israel. And when its dumb tongue was loosed, it spoke the speech they had made alive with the new blood of their ardour, their sorrow, and their martyred trust: it sang with the cadence of their strain."

Mordecai paused again, and then said in a loud, hoarse whisper, —

"While it is imprisoned in me, it will never learn another."

"Have you written entirely in Hebrew, then?" said Deronda, remembering with some anxiety the former question as to his own knowledge of that tongue.

"Yes — yes," said Mordecai, in a tone of deep sadness; "in my youth I wandered toward that solitude, not feeling that it was a solitude. I had the ranks of the great dead around me; the martyrs gathered and listened. But soon I found that the living were deaf to me. At first I saw my life spread as a long future: I said, part of my Jewish heritage is an unbreaking patience; part is skill to seek divers methods and find a rooting-place where the planters despair. But there came new messengers from the Eternal. I had to bow under the yoke that presses on the great multitude born of woman: family troubles called me, — I had to work, to care, not for myself alone. I was left solitary again; but already the angel of death had

turned to me and beckoned, and I felt his skirts continually on my path. I loosed not my effort. I besought hearing and help. I spoke; I went to men of our people, — to the rich in influence or knowledge, to the rich in other wealth. But I found none to listen with understanding. I was rebuked for error; I was offered a small sum in charity. No wonder. I looked poor; I carried a bundle of Hebrew manuscript with me; I said, our chief teachers are misleading the hope of our race. Scholar and merchant were both too busy to listen. Scorn stood as interpreter between me and them. One said, 'The Book of Mormon would never have answered in Hebrew; and if you mean to address our learned men, it is not likely you can teach them anything.' He touched a truth there."

The last words had a perceptible irony in their hoarsened tone.

"But though you had accustomed yourself to write in Hebrew, few, surely, can use English better," said Deronda, wanting to hint consolation in a new effort for which he could smooth the way.

Mordecai shook his head slowly, and answered, —

"Too late, — too late. I can write no more. My writing would be like this gasping breath. But the breath may wake the fount of pity, — the writing not. If I could write now and used English, I should be as one who beats a board to summon those who have been used to no signal but a bell. My soul has an ear to hear the faults of its own speech. New writing of mine would be like this body," — Mordecai spread

his arms, — " within it there might be the Ruach-ha-kodesh, — the breath of divine thought — but men would smile at it and say, ' A poor Jew! ' — and the chief smilers would be of my own people."

Mordecai let his hands fall, and his head sink in melancholy; for the moment he had lost hold of his hope. Despondency, conjured up by his own words, had floated in and hovered above him with eclipsing wings. He had sunk into momentary darkness.

" I feel with you, — I feel strongly with you," said Deronda, in a clear deep voice which was itself a cordial, apart from the words of sympathy. " But — forgive me if I speak hastily — for what you have actually written there need be no utter burial. The means of publication are within reach. If you will rely on me, I can assure you of all that is necessary to that end."

" That is not enough," said Mordecai, quickly, looking up again with the flash of recovered memory and confidence. " That is not all my trust in you. You must be not only a hand to me, but a soul — believing my belief — being moved by my reasons — hoping my hope — seeing the vision I point to — beholding a glory where I behold it! " — Mordecai had taken a step nearer as he spoke, and now laid his hand on Deronda's arm with a tight grasp; his face little more than a foot off had something like a pale flame in it, — an intensity of reliance that acted as a peremptory claim, while he went on: " You will be my life; it will be planted afresh; it will grow. You shall take the inheritance; it has been gathering for ages. The generations are crowding on my narrow life as

a bridge: what has been and what is to be are meeting there; and the bridge is breaking. But I have found you. You have come in time. You will take the inheritance which the base son refuses because of the tombs which the plough and harrow may not pass over or the gold-seeker disturb: you will take the sacred inheritance of the Jew."

Deronda had become as pallid as Mordecai. Quick as an alarm of flood or fire, there spread within him not only a compassionate dread of discouraging this fellow-man who urged a prayer as of one in the last agony, but also the opposing dread of fatally feeding an illusion, and being hurried on to a self-committal which might turn into a falsity. The peculiar appeal to his tenderness overcame the repulsion that most of us experience under a grasp and speech which assume to dominate. The difficulty to him was to inflict the accents of hesitation and doubt on this ardent suffering creature, who was crowding too much of his brief being into a moment of perhaps extravagant trust. With exquisite instinct, Deronda, before he opened his lips, placed his palm gently on Mordecai's straining hand, — an act just then equal to many speeches. And after that he said, without haste, as if conscious that he might be wrong, —

"Do you forget what I told you when we first saw each other? Do you remember that I said I was not of your race?"

"It can't be true," Mordecai whispered immediately, with no sign of shock. The sympathetic hand still upon him had fortified the

feeling which was stronger than those words of denial. There was a perceptible pause, Deronda feeling it impossible to answer, conscious indeed that the assertion, "It can't be true," had the pressure of argument for him. Mordecai, too entirely possessed by the supreme importance of the relation between himself and Deronda to have any other care in his speech, followed up that assertion by a second, which came to his lips as a mere sequence of his long-cherished conviction, —

"You are not sure of your own origin."

"How do you know that?" said Daniel, with an habitual shrinking which made him remove his hand from Mordecai's, who also relaxed his hold, and fell back into his former leaning position.

"I know it, — I know it; what is my life else?" said Mordecai, with a low cry of impatience. "Tell me everything: tell me why you deny."

He could have no conception what that demand was to the hearer, — how probingly it touched the hidden sensibility, the vividly conscious reticence of years; how the uncertainty he was insisting on as part of his own hope had always for Daniel been a threatening possibility of painful revelation about his mother. But the moment had influences which were not only new but solemn to Deronda: any evasion here might turn out to be a hateful refusal of some task that belonged to him, some act of due fellowship; in any case it would be a cruel rebuff to a being who was appealing to him as a forlorn hope under the shadow of a coming doom. After a few moments he said, with a great effort over

himself, — determined to tell all the truth briefly, —

"I have never known my mother. I have no knowledge about her. I have never called any man father. But I am convinced that my father is an Englishman."

Deronda's deep tones had a tremor in them as he uttered this confession; and all the while there was an undercurrent of amazement in him at the strange circumstances under which he uttered it. It seemed as if Mordecai were hardly overrating his own power to determine the action of the friend whom he had mysteriously chosen.

"It will be seen, — it will be declared," said Mordecai, triumphantly. "The world grows, and its frame is knit together by the growing soul; dim, dim at first, then clearer and more clear, the consciousness discerns remote stirrings. As thoughts move within us darkly, and shake us before they are fully discerned, — so events, so beings: they are knit with us in the growth of the world. You have risen within me like a thought not fully spelled: my soul is shaken before the words are all there. The rest will come, — it will come."

"We must not lose sight of the fact that the outward event has not always been a fulfilment of the firmest faith," said Deronda, in a tone that was made hesitating by the painfully conflicting desires, not to give any severe blow to Mordecai, and not to give his confidence a sanction which might have the severest of blows in reserve.

Mordecai's face, which had been illuminated to the utmost in that last declaration of his confidence, changed under Deronda's words, but

not into any show of collapsed trust: the force did not disappear from the expression, but passed from the triumphant into the firmly resistant.

"You would remind me that I may be under an illusion, — that the history of our people's trust has been full of illusion. I face it all." Here Mordecai paused a moment. Then bending his head a little forward, he said, in his hoarse whisper, "*So it might be with my trust, if you would make it an illusion. But you will not.*"

The very sharpness with which these words penetrated Deronda, made him feel the more that here was a crisis in which he must be firm.

"What my birth was does not lie in my will," he answered. "My sense of claims on me cannot be independent of my knowledge there. And I cannot promise you that I will try to hasten a disclosure. Feelings which have struck root through half my life may still hinder me from doing what I have never yet been able to do. Everything must be waited for. I must know more of the truth about my own life, and I must know more of what it would become if it were made a part of yours."

Mordecai had folded his arms again while Deronda was speaking, and now answered with equal firmness, though with difficult breathing, —

"You *shall* know. What are we met for, but that you should know? Your doubts lie as light as dust on my belief. I know the philosophies of this time and of other times: if I chose I could answer a summons before their tribunals. I could silence the beliefs which are the mother-

tongue of my soul, and speak with the rote-learned language of a system that gives you the spelling of all things, sure of its alphabet covering them all. I could silence them: may not a man silence his awe or his love and take to finding reasons, which others demand? But if his love lies deeper than any reasons to be found? Man finds his pathways: at first they were foot-tracks, as those of the beast in the wilderness; now they are swift and invisible: his thought dives through the ocean, and his wishes thread the air: has he found all the pathways yet? What reaches him, stays with him, rules him: he must accept it, not knowing its pathway. Say, my expectation of you has grown but as false hopes grow. That doubt is in your mind? Well, my expectation was there, and you are come. Men have died of thirst. But I was thirsty, and the water is on my lips. What are doubts to me? In the hour when you come to me and say, 'I reject your soul: I know that I am not a Jew: we have no lot in common,' — I shall not doubt. I shall be certain, — certain that I have been deluded. That hour will never come!"

Deronda felt a new chord sounding in this speech: it was rather imperious than appealing, — had more of conscious power than of the yearning need which had acted as a beseeching grasp on him before. And usually, though he was the reverse of pugnacious, such a change of attitude towards him would have weakened his inclination to admit a claim. But here there was something that balanced his resistance and kept it aloof. This strong man whose gaze was

sustainedly calm and his finger-nails pink with health, who was exercised in all questioning, and accused of excessive mental independence, still felt a subduing influence over him in the tenacious certitude of the fragile creature before him, whose pallid yellow nostril was tense with effort as his breath laboured under the burthen of eager speech. The influence seemed to strengthen the bond of sympathetic obligation. In Deronda at this moment the desire to escape what might turn into a trying embarrassment was no more likely to determine action than the solicitations of indolence are likely to determine it in one with whom industry is a daily law. He answered simply, —

"It is my wish to meet and satisfy your wishes wherever that is possible to me. It is certain to me at least that I desire not to undervalue your toil and your suffering. Let me know your thoughts. But where can we meet?"

"I have thought of that," said Mordecai. "It is not hard for you to come into this neighbourhood later in the evening? You did so once."

"I can manage it very well occasionally," said Deronda. "You live under the same roof with the Cohens, I think?"

Before Mordecai could answer, Mr. Ram reentered to take his place behind the counter. He was an elderly son of Abraham, whose childhood had fallen on the evil times at the beginning of this century, and who remained amid this smart and instructed generation as a preserved specimen, soaked through and through with the effect of the poverty and contempt which were the

common heritage of most English Jews seventy years ago. He had none of the oily cheerfulness observable in Mr. Cohen's aspect: his very features — broad and chubby — showed that tendency to look mongrel without due cause which in a miscellaneous London neighbourhood may perhaps be compared with the marvels of imitation in insects, and may have been nature's imperfect effort on behalf of the purer Caucasian to shield him from the shame and spitting to which purer features would have been exposed in the times of zeal. Mr. Ram dealt ably in books in the same way that he would have dealt in tins of meat and other commodities, — without knowledge or responsibility as to the proportion of rottenness or nourishment they might contain. But he believed in Mordecai's learning as something marvellous, and was not sorry that his conversation should be sought by a bookish gentleman, whose visits had twice ended in a purchase. He greeted Deronda with a crabbed good-will, and, putting on large silver spectacles, appeared at once to abstract himself in the daily accounts.

But Deronda and Mordecai were soon in the street together, and, without any explicit agreement as to their direction, were walking towards Ezra Cohen's.

"We can't meet there: my room is too narrow," said Mordecai, taking up the thread of talk where they had dropped it. "But there is a tavern not far from here where I sometimes go to a club. It is the *Hand and Banner,* in the street at the next turning, five doors down. We can have the parlour there any evening."

"We can try that for once," said Deronda. "But you will perhaps let me provide you with some lodging, which would give you more freedom and comfort than where you are."

"No; I need nothing. My outer life is as naught. I will take nothing less precious from you than your soul's brotherhood. I will think of nothing else yet. But I am glad you are rich. You did not need money on that diamond ring. You had some other motive for bringing it."

Deronda was a little startled by this clear-sightedness; but before he could reply, Mordecai added: "It is all one. Had you been in need of the money, the great end would have been that we should meet again. But you are rich?" he ended, in a tone of interrogation.

"Not rich, except in the sense that every one is rich who has more than he needs for himself."

"I desired that your life should be free," said Mordecai, dreamily, — "mine has been a bondage."

It was clear that he had no interest in the fact of Deronda's appearance at the Cohens' beyond its relation to his own ideal purpose. Despairing of leading easily up to the question he wished to ask, Deronda determined to put it abruptly, and said, —

"Can you tell me why Mrs. Cohen, the mother, must not be spoken to about her daughter?"

There was no immediate answer, and he thought that he should have to repeat the question. The fact was that Mordecai had heard

the words, but had to drag his mind to a new subject away from his passionate preoccupation. After a few moments, he replied with a careful effort such as he would have used if he had been asked the road to Holborn, —

"I know the reason. But I will not speak even of trivial family affairs which I have heard in the privacy of the family. I dwell in their tent as in a sanctuary. Their history, so far as they injure none other, is their own possession."

Deronda felt the blood mounting to his cheeks as a sort of rebuke he was little used to, and he also found himself painfully baffled where he had reckoned with some confidence on getting decisive knowledge. He became the more conscious of emotional strain from the excitements of the day; and although he had the money in his pocket to redeem his ring, he recoiled from the further task of a visit to the Cohens', which must be made not only under the former uncertainty, but under a new disappointment as to the possibility of its removal.

"I will part from you now," he said, just before they could reach Cohen's door; and Mordecai paused, looking up at him with an anxious fatigued face under the gaslight.

"When will you come back?" he said, with slow emphasis.

"May I leave that unfixed? May I ask for you at the Cohens' any evening after your hour at the book-shop? There is no objection, I suppose, to their knowing that you and I meet in private?"

"None," said Mordecai. "But the days I wait now are longer than the years of my

strength. Life shrinks: what was but a tithe is now the half. My hope abides in you."

"I will be faithful," said Deronda, — he could not have left those words unuttered. "I will come the first evening I can after seven: on Saturday or Monday, if possible. Trust me."

He put out his ungloved hand. Mordecai, clasping it eagerly, seemed to feel a new in-streaming of confidence, and he said with some recovered energy, "This is come to pass, and the rest will come."

That was their good-by.

Book Six

REVELATIONS

CHAPTER I

This, too, is probable, according to that saying of Agathon: "It is a part of probability that many improbable things will happen." — ARISTOTLE: *Poetics.*

IMAGINE the conflict in a mind like Deronda's, given not only to feel strongly but to question actively, on the evening after that interview with Mordecai. To a young man of much duller susceptibilities the adventure might have seemed enough out of the common way to divide his thoughts; but it had stirred Deronda so deeply, that with the usual reaction of his intellect he began to examine the grounds of his emotion, and consider how far he must resist its guidance. The consciousness that he was half dominated by Mordecai's energetic certitude, and still more by his fervent trust, roused his alarm. It was his characteristic bias to shrink from the moral stupidity of valuing lightly what had come close to him, and of missing blindly in his own life of to-day the crisis which he recognized as momentous and sacred in the historic life of men. If he had read of this incident as having happened centuries ago in Rome, Greece, Asia Minor, Palestine, Cairo, to some man young as himself, dissatisfied with

his neutral life, and wanting some closer fellowship, some more special duty to give him ardour for the possible consequences of his work, it would have appeared to him quite natural that the incident should have created a deep impression on that far-off man, whose clothing and action would have been seen in his imagination as part of an age chiefly known to us through its more serious effects. Why should he be ashamed of his own agitated feeling merely because he dressed for dinner, wore a white tie, and lived among people who might laugh at his owning any conscience in the matter as the solemn folly of taking himself too seriously? — that bugbear of circles in which the lack of grave emotion passes for wit. From such cowardice before modish ignorance and obtuseness, Deronda shrank. But he also shrank from having his course determined by mere contagion, without consent of reason; or from allowing a reverential pity for spiritual struggle to hurry him along a dimly seen path.

What, after all, had really happened? He knew quite accurately the answer Sir Hugo would have given: "A consumptive Jew, possessed by a fanaticism which obstacles and hastening death intensified, had fixed on Deronda as the anti-type of some visionary image, the offspring of wedded hope and despair: despair of his own life, irrepressible hope in the propagation of his fanatical beliefs. The instance was perhaps odd, exceptional in its form, but substantially it was not rare. Fanaticism was not so common as bankruptcy, but taken in all its aspects it was abundant enough. While Mordecai

was waiting on the bridge for the fulfilment of his visions, another man was convinced that he had the mathematical key of the universe which would supersede Newton, and regarded all known physicists as conspiring to stifle his discovery and keep the universe locked; another, that he had the metaphysical key, with just that hair's-breadth of difference from the old wards which would make it fit exactly. Scattered here and there in every direction you might find a terrible person, with more or less power of speech, and with an eye either glittering or preternaturally dull, on the look-out for the man who must hear him; and in most cases he had volumes which it was difficult to get printed, or if printed to get read. This Mordecai happened to have a more pathetic aspect, a more passionate, penetrative speech than was usual with such monomaniacs: he was more poetical than a social reformer with coloured views of the new moral world in parallelograms, or than an enthusiast in sewage; still he came under the same class. It would be only right and kind to indulge him a little, to comfort him with such help as was practicable; but what likelihood was there that his notions had the sort of value he ascribed to them? In such cases a man of the world knows what to think beforehand. And as to Mordecai's conviction that he had found a new executive self, it might be preparing for him the worst of disappointments,—that which presents itself as final."

Deronda's ear caught all these negative whisperings; nay, he repeated them distinctly to himself. It was not the first but it was the most pressing occasion on which he had had to face this

question of the family likeness among the heirs of enthusiasm, whether prophets, or dreamers of dreams, whether the

"Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,"

or the devotees of phantasmal discovery, — from the first believer in his own unmanifested inspiration, down to the last inventor of an ideal machine that will achieve perpetual motion. The kinship of human passion, the sameness of mortal scenery, inevitably fill fact with burlesque and parody. Error and folly have had their hecatombs of martyrs. Reduce the grandest type of man hitherto known to an abstract statement of his qualities and efforts, and he appears in dangerous company: say that, like Copernicus and Galileo, he was immovably convinced in the face of hissing incredulity; but so is the contriver of perpetual motion. We cannot fairly try the spirits by this sort of test. If we want to avoid giving the dose of hemlock or the sentence of banishment in the wrong case, nothing will do but a capacity to understand the subject-matter on which the immovable man is convinced, and fellowship with human travail, both near and afar, to hinder us from scanning any deep experience lightly. Shall we say, "Let the ages try the spirits, and see what they are worth"? Why, we are the beginning of the ages, which can only be just by virtue of just judgments in separate human breasts, — separate yet combined. Even steam-engines could not have got made without that condition, but must have stayed in the mind of James Watt.

This track of thinking was familiar enough to

Deronda to have saved him from any contemptuous prejudgment of Mordecai, even if their communication had been free from that peculiar claim on himself strangely ushered in by some long-growing preparation in the Jew's agitated mind. This claim, indeed, considered in what is called a rational way, might seem justifiably dismissed as illusory and even preposterous; but it was precisely what turned Mordecai's hold on him from an appeal to his ready sympathy into a clutch on his struggling conscience. Our consciences are not all of the same pattern, an inner deliverance of fixed laws: they are the voice of sensibilities as various as our memories (which also have their kinship and likeness). And Deronda's conscience included sensibilities beyond the common, enlarged by his early habit of thinking himself imaginatively into the experience of others.

What was the claim this eager soul made upon him? — "You must believe my beliefs — be moved by my reasons — hope my hopes — see the vision I point to — behold a glory where I behold it!" To take such a demand in the light of an obligation in any direct sense would have been preposterous, — to have seemed to admit it would have been dishonesty; and Deronda, looking on the agitation of those moments, felt thankful that in the midst of his compassion he had preserved himself from the bondage of false concessions. The claim hung, too, on a supposition which might be — nay, probably was — in discordance with the full fact: the supposition that he, Deronda, was of Jewish blood. Was there ever a more hypothetic appeal?

But since the age of thirteen Deronda had associated the deepest experience of his affections with what was a pure supposition, namely, that Sir Hugo was his father: that was a hypothesis which had been the source of passionate struggle within him; by its light he had been accustomed to subdue feelings and to cherish them. He had been well used to find a motive in a conception which might be disproved; and he had been also used to think of some revelation that might influence his view of the particular duties belonging to him. To be in a state of suspense which was also one of emotive activity and scruple was a familiar attitude of his conscience.

And now, suppose that wish-begotten belief in his Jewish birth, and that extravagant demand of discipleship, to be the foreshadowing of an actual discovery and a genuine spiritual result: suppose that Mordecai's ideas made a real conquest over Deronda's conviction? Nay, it was conceivable that as Mordecai needed and believed that he had found an active replenishment of himself, so Deronda might receive from Mordecai's mind the complete ideal shape of that personal duty and citizenship which lay in his own thought like sculptured fragments certifying some beauty yearned after but not traceable by divination.

As that possibility presented itself in his meditations, he was aware that it would be called dreamy, and began to defend it. If the influence he imagined himself submitting to had been that of some honoured professor, some authority in a seat of learning, some philosopher who had been accepted as a voice of the age, would a thorough

receptiveness towards direction have been ridiculed? Only by those who hold it a sign of weakness to be obliged for an idea, and prefer to hint that they have implicitly held in a more correct form whatever others have stated with a sadly short-coming explicitness. After all, what was there but vulgarity in taking the fact that Mordecai was a poor Jewish workman, and that he was to be met perhaps on a sanded floor in the parlour of the *Hand and Banner*, as a reason for determining beforehand that there was not some spiritual force within him that might have a determining effect on a white-handed gentleman? There is a legend told of the Emperor Domitian, that having heard of a Jewish family, of the house of David, whence the ruler of the world was to spring, he sent for its members in alarm, but quickly released them on observing that they had the hands of work-people, — being of just the opposite opinion with that Rabbi who stood waiting at the gate of Rome in confidence that the Messiah would be found among the destitute who entered there. Both Emperor and Rabbi were wrong in their trust of outward signs: poverty and poor clothes are no sign of inspiration, said Deronda to his inward objector, but they have gone with it in some remarkable cases. And to regard discipleship as out of the question because of them, would be mere dulness of imagination.

A more plausible reason for putting discipleship out of the question was the strain of visionary excitement in Mordecai, which turned his wishes into overmastering impressions, and made him read outward facts as fulfilment. Was such

a temper of mind likely to accompany that wise estimate of consequences which is the only safeguard from fatal error, even to ennobling motive? But it remained to be seen whether that rare conjunction existed or not in Mordecai: perhaps his might be one of the natures where a wise estimate of consequences is fused in the fires of that passionate belief which determines the consequences it believes in. The inspirations of the world have come in that way too: even strictly measuring science could hardly have got on without that forecasting ardour which feels the agitations of discovery beforehand, and has a faith in its preconception that surmounts many failures of experiment. And in relation to human motives and actions, passionate belief has a fuller efficacy. Here enthusiasm may have the validity of proof, and, happening in one soul, give the type of what will one day be general.

At least, Deronda argued, Mordecai's visionary excitability was hardly a reason for concluding beforehand that he was not worth listening to except for pity's sake. Suppose he had introduced himself as one of the strictest reasoners: do they form a body of men hitherto free from false conclusions and illusory speculations? The driest argument has its hallucinations, too hastily concluding that its net will now at last be large enough to hold the universe. Men may dream in demonstrations, and cut out an illusory world in the shape of axioms, definitions, and propositions, with a final exclusion of fact signed Q. E. D. No formulas for thinking will save us mortals from mistake in our imperfect apprehension of the matter to be thought about. And since the

unemotional intellect may carry us into a mathematical dreamland where nothing is but what is not, perhaps an emotional intellect may have absorbed into its passionate vision of possibilities some truth of what will be, — the more comprehensive massive life feeding theory with new material, as the sensibility of the artist seizes combinations which science explains and justifies. At any rate, presumptions to the contrary are not to be trusted. We must be patient with the inevitable makeshift of our human thinking, whether in its sum total or in the separate minds that have made the sum. Columbus had some impressions about himself which we call superstitions, and used some arguments which we disapprove; but he had also some true physical conceptions, and he had the passionate patience of genius to make them tell on mankind. The world has made up its mind rather contemptuously about those who were deaf to Columbus.

"My contempt for them binds me to see that I don't adopt their mistake on a small scale," said Deronda, "and make myself deaf with the assumption that there cannot be any momentous relation between this Jew and me, simply because he has clad it in illusory notions. What I can be to him, or he to me, may not at all depend on his persuasion about the way we came together. To me the way seems made up of plainly discernible links. If I had not found Mirah, it is probable that I should not have begun to be specially interested in the Jews, and certainly I should not have gone on that loitering search after an Ezra Cohen which made me pause at Ram's book-shop and ask the price of *Maimon.*

Mordecai, on his side, had his visions of a disciple, and he saw me by their light; I corresponded well enough with the image his longing had created. He took me for one of his race. Suppose that his impression, — the elderly Jew at Frankfort seemed to have something like it, — suppose, in spite of all presumptions to the contrary, that his impression should somehow be proved true, and that I should come actually to share any of the ideas he is devoted to? This is the only question which really concerns the effect of our meeting on my life.

"But if the issue should be quite different? — well, there will be something painful to go through. I shall almost inevitably have to be an active cause of that poor fellow's crushing disappointment. Perhaps this issue is the one I had need prepare myself for. I fear that no tenderness of mine can make his suffering lighter. Would the alternative — that I should not disappoint him — be less painful to me?"

Here Deronda wavered. Feelings had lately been at work within him which had very much modified the reluctance he would formerly have had to think of himself as probably a Jew. And, if you like, he was romantic. That young energy and spirit of adventure which have helped to create the world-wide legends of youthful heroes going to seek the hidden tokens of their birth and its inheritance of tasks, gave him a certain quivering interest in the bare possibility that he was entering on a like track, — all the more because the track was one of thought as well as action.

"The bare possibility." He could not admit it to be more. The belief that his father was an

Englishman only grew firmer under the weak assaults of unwarranted doubt. And that a moment should ever come in which that belief was declared a delusion, was something of which Deronda would not say, "I should be glad." His lifelong affection for Sir Hugo, stronger than all his resentment, made him shrink from admitting that wish.

Which way soever the truth might lie, he repeated to himself what he had said to Mordecai, — that he could not without farther reason undertake to hasten its discovery. Nay, he was tempted now to regard his uncertainty as a condition to be cherished for the present. If further intercourse revealed nothing but illusions as what he was expected to share in, the want of any valid evidence that he was a Jew might save Mordecai the worst shock in the refusal of fraternity. It might even be justifiable to use the uncertainty on this point in keeping up a suspense which would induce Mordecai to accept those offices of friendship that Deronda longed to urge on him.

These were the meditations that busied Deronda in the interval of four days before he could fulfil his promise to call for Mordecai at Ezra Cohen's, Sir Hugo's demands on him often lasting to an hour so late as to put the evening expedition to Holborn out of the question.

CHAPTER II

Wenn es eine Stufenleiter von Leiden giebt, so hat Israel die höchste Staffel erstiegen; wenn die Dauer der Schmerzen und die Geduld, mit welcher sie ertragen werden, adeln, so nehmen es die Juden mit den Hochgeborenen aller Länder auf; wenn eine Literatur reich genannt wird, die wenige klassische Trauerspiele besitzt, welcher Platz gebührt dann einer Tragödie die anderthalb Jahrtausende währt, gedichtet und dargestellt von den Helden selber? — ZUNZ: *Die Synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters.*

"IF there are ranks in suffering, Israel takes precedence of all the nations,—if the duration of sorrows and the patience with which they are borne ennoble, the Jews are among the aristocracy of every land, — if a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classic tragedies, what shall we say to a National Tragedy lasting for fifteen hundred years, in which the poets and the actors were also the heroes?"

Deronda had lately been reading that passage of Zunza, and it occurred to him by way of contrast when he was going to the Cohens, who certainly bore no obvious stamp of distinction in sorrow or in any other form of aristocracy. Ezra Cohen was not clad in the sublime pathos of the martyr, and his taste for money-getting seemed to be favoured with that success which has been the most exasperating difference in the greed of Jews during all the ages of their dispersion. This Jeshurun of a pawnbroker was not a symbol of the great Jewish tragedy; and yet was there not something typical in the fact that a life like Mordecai's — a frail incorporation of the national consciousness, breathing with difficult

breath — was nested in the self-gratulating ignorant prosperity of the Cohens?

Glistening was the gladness in their faces when Deronda reappeared among them. Cohen himself took occasion to intimate that although the diamond ring, let alone a little longer, would have bred more money, he did not mind *that,* — not a sixpence, — when compared with the pleasure of the women and children in seeing a young gentleman whose first visit had been so agreeable that they had " done nothing but talk of it ever since." Young Mrs. Cohen was very sorry that baby was asleep, and then very glad that Adelaide was not yet gone to bed, entreating Deronda not to stay in the shop but to go forthwith into the parlour to see " mother and the children." He willingly accepted the invitation, having provided himself with portable presents, — a set of paper figures for Adelaide, and an ivory cup and ball for Jacob.

The grandmother had a pack of cards before her, and was making " plates " with the children. A plate had just been thrown down and kept itself whole.

" Stop! " said Jacob, running up to Deronda as he entered. " Don't tread on my plate. Stop and see me throw it up again."

Deronda complied, exchanging a smile of understanding with the grandmother, and the plate bore several tossings before it came to pieces; then the visitor was allowed to come forward and seat himself. He observed that the door from which Mordecai had issued on the former visit was now closed, but he wished to show his interest in the Cohens before dis-

closing a yet stronger interest in their singular inmate.

It was not until he had Adelaide on his knee, and was setting up the paper figures in their dance on the table, while Jacob was already practising with the cup and ball, that Deronda said, —

"Is Mordecai in just now?"

"Where is he, Addy?" said Cohen, who had seized an interval of business to come and look on.

"In the workroom there," said his wife, nodding towards the closed door.

"The fact is, sir," said Cohen, "we don't know what 's come to him this last day or two. He 's always what I may call a little touched, you know," — here Cohen pointed to his own forehead, — "not quite to say rational in all things, like you and me; but he 's mostly wonderful regular and industrious as far as a poor creature can be, and takes as much delight in the boy as anybody could. But this last day or two he 's been moving about like a sleep-walker, or else sitting as still as a wax figure."

"It 's the disease, poor dear creature," said the grandmother, tenderly. "I doubt whether he can stand long against it."

"No; I think it 's only something he 's got in his head," said Mrs. Cohen the younger. "He 's been turning over writing continually, and when I speak to him it takes him ever so long to hear and answer."

"You may think us a little weak ourselves," said Cohen, apologetically. "But my wife and mother would n't part with him if he was a still

worse encumbrance. It is n't that we don't know the long and short of matters, but it 's our principle. There 's fools do business at a loss and don't know it. I 'm not one of 'em."

" Oh, Mordecai carries a blessing inside him," said the grandmother.

" He 's got something the matter inside him," said Jacob, coming up to correct this erratum of his grandmother's. " He said he could n't talk to me, and he would n't have a bit o' bun."

" So far from wondering at your feeling for him," said Deronda, " I already feel something of the same sort myself. I have lately talked to him at Ram's book-shop, — in fact, I promised to call for him here, that we might go out together."

" That 's it, then! " said Cohen, slapping his knee. " He 's been expecting you, and it 's taken hold of him. I suppose he talks about his learning to you. It 's uncommonly kind of *you,* sir; for I don't suppose there 's much to be got out of it, else it would n't have left him where he is. But there 's the shop." Cohen hurried out, and Jacob, who had been listening inconveniently near to Deronda's elbow, said to him with obliging familiarity, " I 'll call Mordecai for you, if you like."

" No, Jacob," said his mother; " open the door for the gentleman, and let him go in himself. Hush! don't make a noise."

Skilful Jacob seemed to enter into the play, and turned the handle of the door as noiselessly as possible, while Deronda went behind him and stood on the threshold. The small room was lit only by a dying fire and one candle with a shade

over it. On the board fixed under the window, various objects of jewellery were scattered: some books were heaped in the corner beyond them. Mordecai was seated on a high chair at the board with his back to the door, his hands resting on each other and on the board, a watch propped on a stand before him. He was in a state of expectation as sickening as that of a prisoner listening for the delayed deliverance, — when he heard Deronda's voice saying, "I am come for you. Are you ready?"

Immediately he turned without speaking, seized his furred cap which lay near, and moved to join Deronda. It was but a moment before they were both in the sitting-room, and Jacob, noticing the change in his friend's air and expression, seized him by the arm and said, "See my cup and ball!" sending the ball up close to Mordecai's face, as something likely to cheer a convalescent. It was a sign of the relieved tension in Mordecai's mind that he could smile and say, "Fine, fine!"

"You have forgotten your great-coat and comforter," said young Mrs. Cohen; and he went back into the workroom and got them.

"He 's come to life again, do you see?" said Cohen, who had re-entered, — speaking in an undertone. "I told you so: I 'm mostly right." Then in his usual voice, "Well, sir, we must n't detain you now, I suppose; but I hope this is n't the last time we shall see you."

"Shall you come again?" said Jacob, advancing. "See, I can catch the ball; I 'll bet I catch it without stopping, if you come again."

"He has clever hands," said Deronda, looking

at the grandmother. "Which side of the family does he get them from?"

But the grandmother only nodded towards her son, who said promptly: "My side. My wife's family are not in that line. But, bless your soul! ours is a sort of cleverness as good as gutta percha; you can twist it which way you like. There 's nothing some old gentlemen won't do if you set 'em to it." Here Cohen winked down at Jacob's back, but it was doubtful whether this judicious allusiveness answered its purpose, for its subject gave a nasal whinnying laugh and stamped about, singing, "Old gentlemen, old gentlemen," in chiming cadence.

Deronda thought, "I shall never know anything decisive about these people until I ask Cohen point-blank whether he lost a sister named Mirah when she was six years old." The decisive moment did not yet seem easy for him to face. Still his first sense of repulsion at the commonness of these people was beginning to be tempered with kindlier feeling. However unrefined their airs and speech might be, he was forced to admit some moral refinement in their treatment of the consumptive workman, whose mental distinction impressed them chiefly as a harmless, silent raving.

"The Cohens seem to have an affection for you," said Deronda, as soon as he and Mordecai were off the doorstep.

"And I for them," was the immediate answer. "They have the heart of the Israelite within them, though they are as the horse and the mule, without understanding beyond the narrow path they tread."

"I have caused you some uneasiness, I fear," said Deronda, "by my slowness in fulfilling my promise. I wished to come yesterday, but I found it impossible."

"Yes — yes, I trusted you. But it is true I have been uneasy, for the spirit of my youth has been stirred within me, and this body is not strong enough to bear the beating of its wings. I am as a man bound and imprisoned through long years: behold him brought to speech of his fellow and his limbs set free: he weeps, he totters, the joy within him threatens to break and overthrow the tabernacle of flesh."

"You must not speak too much in this evening air," said Deronda, feeling Mordecai's words of reliance like so many cords binding him painfully. "Cover your mouth with the woollen scarf. We are going to the *Hand and Banner,* I suppose, and shall be in private there?"

"No, that is my trouble that you did not come yesterday. For this is the evening of the club I spoke of, and we might not have any minutes alone until late, when all the rest are gone. Perhaps we had better seek another place. But I am used to that only. In new places the outer world presses on me and narrows the inward vision. And the people there are familiar with my face."

"I don't mind the club if I am allowed to go in," said Deronda. "It is enough that you like this place best. If we have not enough time, I will come again. What sort of club is it?"

"It is called 'The Philosophers.' They are few — like the cedars of Lebanon — poor men

given to thought. But none so poor as I am; and sometimes visitors of higher worldly rank have been brought. We are allowed to introduce a friend who is interested in our topics. Each orders beer or some other kind of drink, in payment for the room. Most of them smoke. I have gone when I could, for there are other men of my race who come, and sometimes I have broken silence. I have pleased myself with a faint likeness between these poor philosophers and the Masters who handed down the thought of our race, — the great Transmitters, who laboured with their hands for scant bread, but preserved and enlarged for us the heritage of memory, and saved the soul of Israel alive as a seed among the tombs. The heart pleases itself with faint resemblances."

"I shall be very glad to go and sit among them, if that will suit you. It is a sort of meeting I should like to join in," said Deronda, not without relief in the prospect of an interval before he went through the strain of his next private conversation with Mordecai.

In three minutes they had opened the glazed door with the red curtain, and were in the little parlour, hardly much more than fifteen feet square, where the gaslight shone through a slight haze of smoke on what to Deronda was a new and striking scene. Half-a-dozen men of various ages, from between twenty and thirty to fifty, all shabbily dressed, most of them with clay pipes in their mouths, were listening with a look of concentrated intelligence to a man in a pepper-and-salt dress, with blond hair, short nose, broad forehead, and general breadth, who,

holding his pipe slightly uplifted in the left hand, and beating his knee with the right, was just finishing a quotation from Shelley (the comparison of the avalanche in his "Prometheus Unbound"), —

> "As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
> Is loosened, and the nations echo round."

The entrance of the new-comers broke the fixity of attention, and called for a re-arrangement of seats in the too narrow semicircle round the fireplace and the table holding the glasses, spare pipes, and tobacco. This was the soberest of clubs; but sobriety is no reason why smoking and "taking something" should be less imperiously needed as a means of getting a decent status in company and debate. Mordecai was received with welcoming voices which had a slight cadence of compassion in them, but naturally all glances passed immediately to his companion.

"I have brought a friend who is interested in our subjects," said Mordecai. "He has travelled and studied much."

"Is the gentleman anonymous? Is he a great Unknown?" said the broad-chested quoter of Shelley, with a humorous air.

"My name is Daniel Deronda. I am unknown, but not in any sense great." The smile breaking over the stranger's grave face as he said this was so agreeable that there was a general indistinct murmur, equivalent to a "Hear, hear;" and the broad man said, —

"You recommend the name, sir, and are welcome. Here, Mordecai, come to this corner

against me," he added, evidently wishing to give the cosiest place to the one who most needed it.

Deronda was well satisfied to get a seat on the opposite side, where his general survey of the party easily included Mordecai, who remained an eminently striking object in this group of sharply characterized figures, more than one of whom, even to Daniel's little exercised discrimination, seemed probably of Jewish descent.

In fact, pure English blood (if leech or lancet can furnish us with the precise product) did not declare itself predominantly in the party at present assembled. Miller, the broad man, an exceptional second-hand bookseller who knew the insides of books, had at least grandparents who called themselves German, and possibly far-away ancestors who denied themselves to be Jews; Buchan, the saddler, was Scotch; Pash, the watchmaker, was a small, dark, vivacious, triple-baked Jew; Gideon, the optical-instrument maker, was a Jew of the red-haired, generous-featured type easily passing for Englishmen of unusually cordial manners; and Croop, the dark-eyed shoemaker, was probably more Celtic than he knew. Only three would have been discernible everywhere as Englishmen: the wood-inlayer Goodwin, well-built, open-faced, pleasant-voiced; the florid laboratory assistant Marrables; and Lilly, the pale, neat-faced copying-clerk, whose light-brown hair was set up in a small parallelogram above his well-filled forehead, and whose shirt, taken with an otherwise seedy costume, had a freshness that might be called insular, and perhaps even something narrower.

Certainly a company select of the select among poor men, being drawn together by a taste not prevalent even among the privileged heirs of learning and its institutions; and not likely to amuse any gentleman in search of crime or low comedy as the ground of interest in people whose weekly income is only divisible into shillings. Deronda, even if he had not been more than usually inclined to gravity under the influence of what was pending between him and Mordecai, would not have set himself to find food for laughter in the various shades of departure from the tone of polished society sure to be observable in the air and talk of these men who had probably snatched knowledge as most of us snatch indulgences, making the utmost of scant opportunity. He looked around him with the quiet air of respect habitual to him among equals, ordered whiskey and water, and offered the contents of his cigar-case, which, characteristically enough, he always carried and hardly ever used for his own behoof, having reasons for not smoking himself, but liking to indulge others. Perhaps it was his weakness to be afraid of seeming strait-laced, and turning himself into a sort of diagram instead of a growth which can exercise the guiding attraction of fellowship. That he made a decidedly winning impression on the company was proved by their showing themselves no less at ease than before, and desirous of quickly resuming their interrupted talk.

"This is what I call one of our touch-and-go nights, sir," said Miller, who was implicitly accepted as a sort of moderator, — addressing Deronda by way of explanation, and nodding

toward each person whose name he mentioned. "Sometimes we stick pretty close to the point. But to-night our friend Pash, there, brought up the law of progress, and we got on statistics; then Lilly, there, saying we knew well enough before counting that in the same state of society the same sort of things would happen, and it was no more wonder that quantities should remain the same than that qualities should remain the same, for in relation to society numbers are qualities — the number of drunkards is a quality in society — the numbers are an index to the qualities, and give us no instruction, only setting us to consider the causes of difference between different social states — Lilly saying this, we went off on the causes of social change, and when you came in I was going upon the power of ideas, which I hold to be the main transforming cause."

"I don't hold with you there, Miller," said Goodwin, the inlayer, more concerned to carry on the subject than to wait for a word from the new guest. "For either you mean so many sorts of things by ideas that I get no knowledge by what you say, any more than if you said light was a cause; or else you mean a particular sort of ideas, and then I go against your meaning as too narrow. For, look at it in one way, all actions men put a bit of thought into are ideas, — say, sowing seed, or making a canoe, or baking clay; and such ideas as these work themselves into life and go on growing with it, but they can't go apart from the material that set them to work and makes a medium for them. It 's the nature of wood and stone yielding to

the knife that raises the idea of shaping them, and with plenty of wood and stone the shaping will go on. I look at it that such ideas as are mixed straight away with all the other elements of life are powerful along with 'em. The slower the mixing, the less power they have. And as to the causes of social change, I look at it in this way, — ideas are a sort of parliament, but there 's a commonwealth outside, and a good deal of the commonwealth is working at change without knowing what the parliament is doing."

"But if you take ready mixing as your test of power," said Pash, "some of the least practical ideas beat everything. They spread without being understood, and enter into the language without being thought of."

"They may act by changing the distribution of gases," said Marrables; "instruments are getting so fine now, men may come to register the spread of a theory by observed changes in the atmosphere and corresponding changes in the nerves."

"Yes," said Pash, his dark face lighting up rather impishly, "there is the idea of nationalities; I dare say the wild asses are snuffing it, and getting more gregarious."

"You don't share that idea?" said Deronda, finding a piquant incongruity between Pash's sarcasm and the strong stamp of race on his features.

"Say rather, he does not share that spirit," said Mordecai, who had turned a melancholy glance on Pash. "Unless nationality is a feeling, what force can it have as an idea?"

"Granted, Mordecai," said Pash, quite good-

humouredly. "And as the feeling of nationality is dying, I take the idea to be no better than a ghost, already walking to announce the death."

"A sentiment may seem to be dying and yet revive into strong life," said Deronda. "Nations have revived. We may live to see a great outburst of force in the Arabs, who are being inspired with a new zeal."

"Amen, amen," said Mordecai, looking at Deronda with a delight which was the beginning of recovered energy: his attitude was more upright, his face was less worn.

"That may hold with backward nations," said Pash, "but with us in Europe the sentiment of nationality is destined to die out. It will last a little longer in the quarters where oppression lasts, but nowhere else. The whole current of progress is setting against it."

"Ay," said Buchan, in a rapid thin Scotch tone which was like the letting in of a little cool air on the conversation, "ye 've done well to bring us round to the point. Ye 're all agreed that societies change — not always and everywhere — but on the whole and in the long-run. Now, with all deference, I would beg t' observe that we have got to examine the nature of changes before we have a warrant to call them progress, which word is supposed to include a bettering, though I apprehend it to be ill chosen for that purpose, since mere motion onward may carry us to a bog or a precipice. And the questions I would put are three: Is all change in the direction of progress? if not, how shall we discern which change is progress and which not? and thirdly, how far and in what ways can we

act upon the course of change so as to promote it where it is beneficial, and divert it where it is injurious?"

But Buchan's attempt to impose his method on the talk was a failure. Lilly immediately said, —

"Change and progress are merged in the idea of development. The laws of development are being discovered, and changes taking place according to them are necessarily progressive; that is to say, if we have any notion of progress or improvement opposed to them, the notion is a mistake."

"I really can't see how you arrive at that sort of certitude about changes by calling them development," said Deronda. "There will still remain the degrees of inevitableness in relation to our own will and acts, and the degrees of wisdom in hastening or retarding; there will still remain the danger of mistaking a tendency which should be resisted for an inevitable law that we must adjust ourselves to, — which seems to me as bad a superstition or false god as any that has been set up without the ceremonies of philosophizing."

"That is a truth," said Mordecai. "Woe to the men who see no place for resistance in this generation! I believe in a growth, a passage, and a new unfolding of life whereof the seed is more perfect, more charged with the elements that are pregnant with diviner form. The life of a people grows, it is knit together and yet expanded, in joy and sorrow, in thought and action; it absorbs the thought of other nations into its own forms, and gives back the thought

as new wealth to the world; it is a power and an organ in the great body of the nations. But there may come a check, an arrest; memories may be stifled, and love may be faint for the lack of them; or memories may shrink into withered relics, — the soul of a people, whereby they know themselves to be one, may seem to be dying for want of common action. But who shall say, 'The fountain of their life is dried up, they shall forever cease to be a nation'? Who shall say it? Not he who feels the life of his people stirring within his own. Shall he say, 'That way events are wending, I will not resist'? His very soul is resistance, and is as a seed of fire that may enkindle the souls of multitudes, and make a new pathway for events."

"I don't deny patriotism," said Gideon, "but we all know you have a particular meaning, Mordecai. You know Mordecai's way of thinking, I suppose." Here Gideon had turned to Deronda, who sat next to him; but without waiting for an answer, he went on: "I 'm a rational Jew myself. I stand by my people as a sort of family relations, and I am for keeping up our worship in a rational way. I don't approve of our people getting baptized, because I don't believe in a Jew's conversion to the Gentile part of Christianity. And now we have political equality, there 's no excuse for a pretence of that sort. But I am for getting rid of all our superstitions and exclusiveness. There 's no reason now why we should n't melt gradually into the populations we live among. That 's the order of the day in point of progress. I would

as soon my children married Christians as Jews. And I 'm for the old maxim, ' A man's country is where he 's well off.' "

" That country 's not so easy to find, Gideon," said the rapid Pash, with a shrug and grimace. " You get ten shillings a week more than I do, and have only half the number of children. If somebody will introduce a brisk trade in watches among the ' Jerusalem wares,' I 'll go — eh, Mordecai, what do you say? "

Deronda, all ear for these hints of Mordecai's opinion, was inwardly wondering at his persistence in coming to this club. For an enthusiastic spirit to meet continually the fixed indifference of men familiar with the object of his enthusiasm is the acceptance of a slow martyrdom, beside which the fate of a missionary tomahawked without any considerate rejection of his doctrines seems hardly worthy of compassion. But Mordecai gave no sign of shrinking: this was a moment of spiritual fulness, and he cared more for the utterance of his faith than for its immediate reception. With a fervour which had no temper in it, but seemed rather the rush of feeling in the opportunity of speech, he answered Pash: —

" What I say is, let every man keep far away from the brotherhood and the inheritance he despises. Thousands on thousands of our race have mixed with the Gentile as Celt with Saxon, and they may inherit the blessing that belongs to the Gentile. You cannot follow them. You are one of the multitudes over this globe who must walk among the nations and be known as Jews, and with words on their lips which mean,

'I wish I had not been born a Jew, I disown any bond with the long travail of my race, I will outdo the Gentile in mocking at our separateness,' they all the while feel breathing on them the breath of contempt because they are Jews, and they will breathe it back poisonously. Can a fresh-made garment of citizenship weave itself straightway into the flesh and change the slow deposit of eighteen centuries? What is the citizenship of him who walks among a people he has no hearty kindred and fellowship with, and has lost the sense of brotherhood with his own race? It is a charter of selfish ambition and rivalry in low greed. He is an alien in spirit, whatever he may be in form; he sucks the blood of mankind, he is not a man. Sharing in no love, sharing in no subjection of the soul, he mocks at all. Is it not truth I speak, Pash?"

"Not exactly, Mordecai," said Pash, "if you mean that I think the worse of myself for being a Jew. What I thank our fathers for is that there are fewer blockheads among us than among other races. But perhaps you are right in thinking the Christians don't like me so well for it."

"Catholics and Protestants have not liked each other much better," said the genial Gideon. "We must wait patiently for prejudices to die out. Many of our people are on a footing with the best, and there 's been a good filtering of our blood into high families. I am for making our expectations rational."

"And so am I!" said Mordecai, quickly, leaning forward with the eagerness of one who

pleads in some decisive crisis, his long thin hands clasped together on his lap. "I too claim to be a rational Jew. But what is it to be rational, — what is it to feel the light of the divine reason growing stronger within and without? It is to see more and more of the hidden bonds that bind and consecrate change as a dependent growth, — yea, consecrate it with kinship: the past becomes my parent, and the future stretches towards me the appealing arms of children. Is it rational to drain away the sap of special kindred that makes the families of man rich in interchanged wealth, and various as the forests are various with the glory of the cedar and the palm? When it is rational to say, 'I know not my father or my mother, let my children be aliens to me, that no prayer of mine may touch them,' then it will be rational for the Jew to say, 'I will seek to know no difference between me and the Gentile, I will not cherish the prophetic consciousness of our nationality, — let the Hebrew cease to be, and let all his memorials be antiquarian trifles, dead as the wall-paintings of a conjectured race. Yet let his child learn by rote the speech of the Greek, where he adjures his fellow-citizens by the bravery of those who fought foremost at Marathon, — let him learn to say, that was noble in the Greek, that is the spirit of an immortal nation! But the Jew has no memories that bind him to action; let him laugh that his nation is degraded from a nation; let him hold the monuments of his law which carried within its frame the breath of social justice, of charity, and of household sanctities, — let him hold the energy of the prophets, the patient care of the Masters,

the fortitude of martyred generations, as mere stuff for a professorship. The business of the Jew in all things is to be even as the rich Gentile.' "

Mordecai threw himself back in his chair, and there was a moment's silence. Not one member of the club shared his point of view or his emotion; but his whole personality and speech had on them the effect of a dramatic representation which had some pathos in it, though no practical consequences; and usually he was at once indulged and contradicted. Deronda's mind went back on what must have been the tragic pressure of outward conditions hindering this man, whose force he felt to be telling on himself, from making any world for his thought in the minds of others, — like a poet among people of a strange speech, who may have a poetry of their own, but have no ear for his cadence, no answering thrill to his discovery of latent virtues in his mother tongue.

The cool Buchan was the first to speak, and hint the loss of time. " I submit," said he, " that ye 're travelling away from the questions I put concerning progress."

" Say they 're levanting, Buchan," said Miller, who liked his joke, and would not have objected to be called Voltairian. " Never mind. Let us have a Jewish night; we 've not had one for a long while. Let us take the discussion on Jewish ground. I suppose we 've no prejudice here; we 're all philosophers; and we like our friends Mordecai, Pash, and Gideon, as well as if they were no more kin to Abraham than the rest of us. We 're all related through Adam, until further

showing to the contrary, and if you look into history we 've all got some discreditable forefathers. So I mean no offence when I say I don't think any great things of the part the Jewish people have played in the world. What then? I think they were iniquitously dealt by in past times. And I suppose we don't want any men to be maltreated, white, black, brown, or yellow, — I know I 've just given my half-crown to the contrary. And that reminds me, I 've a curious old German book, — I can't read it myself, but a friend was reading out of it to me the other day, — about the prejudices against the Jews, and the stories used to be told against 'em, and what do you think one was? Why, that they 're punished with a bad odour in their bodies; and *that,* says the author, date 1715 (I 've just been pricing and marking the book this very morning) — that is true, for the ancients spoke of it. But then, he says, the other things are fables, such as that the odour goes away all at once when they 're baptized, and that every one of the ten tribes, mind you, all the ten being concerned in the crucifixion, has got a particular punishment over and above the smell; Asher, I remember, has the right arm a handbreadth shorter than the left, and Naphtali has pigs' ears and a smell of live pork. What do you think of that? There 's been a good deal of fun made of rabbinical fables, but in point of fables my opinion is, that all over the world it 's six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. However, as I said before, I hold with the philosophers of the last century that the Jews have played no great part as a people, though Pash will have it they 're clever enough

to beat all the rest of the world. But if so, I ask, why have n't they done it?"

"For the same reason that the cleverest men in the country don't get themselves or their ideas into Parliament," said the ready Pash; "because the blockheads are too many for 'em."

"That is a vain question," said Mordecai, "whether our people would beat the rest of the world. Each nation has its own work, and is a member of the world, enriched by the work of each. But it is true, as Jehuda-ha-Levi first said, that Israel is the heart of mankind, if we mean by heart the core of affection which binds a race and its families in dutiful love, and the reverence for the human body which lifts the needs of our animal life into religion, and the tenderness which is merciful to the poor and weak and to the dumb creature that wears the yoke for us."

"They 're not behind any nation in arrogance," said Lilly; "and if they have got in the rear, it has not been because they were overmodest."

"Oh, every nation brags in its turn," said Miller.

"Yes," said Pash; "and some of them in the Hebrew text."

"Well, whatever the Jews contributed at one time, they are a stand-still people," said Lilly. "They are the type of obstinate adherence to the superannuated. They may show good abilities when they take up liberal ideas, but as a race they have no development in them."

"That is false!" said Mordecai, leaning forward again with his former eagerness. "Let their history be known and examined; let the

seed be sifted, let its beginning be traced to the weed of the wilderness, — the more glorious will be the energy that transformed it. Where else is there a nation of whom it may be as truly said that their religion and law and moral life mingled as the stream of blood in the heart and made one growth, — where else a people who kept and enlarged their spiritual store at the very time when they were hunted with a hatred as fierce as the forest fires that chase the wild beast from his covert? There is a fable of the Roman, that swimming to save his life he held the roll of his writings between his teeth and saved them from the waters. But how much more than that is true of our race? They struggled to keep their place among the nations like heroes, — yea, when the hand was hacked off, they clung with the teeth; but when the plough and the harrow had passed over the last visible signs of their national covenant, and the fruitfulness of their land was stifled with the blood of the sowers and planters, they said, 'The spirit is alive, let us make it a lasting habitation, — lasting because movable, — so that it may be carried from generation to generation, and our sons unborn may be rich in the things that have been, and possess a hope built on an unchangeable foundation.' They said it and they wrought it, though often breathing with scant life, as in a coffin, or as lying wounded amid a heap of slain. Hooted and scared like the unknown dog, the Hebrew made himself envied for his wealth and wisdom, and was bled of them to fill the bath of Gentile luxury; he absorbed knowledge, he diffused it; his dispersed race was a new Phœnicia working

the mines of Greece and carrying their products to the world. The native spirit of our tradition was not to stand still, but to use records as a seed, and draw out the compressed virtues of law and prophecy; and while the Gentile, who had said, 'What is yours is ours, and no longer yours,' was reading the letter of our law as a dark inscription, or was turning its parchments into shoe-soles for an army rabid with lust and cruelty, our Masters were still enlarging and illuminating with fresh-fed interpretation. But the dispersion was wide, the yoke of oppression was a spiked torture as well as a load; the exile was forced afar among brutish people, where the consciousness of his race was no clearer to him than the light of the sun to our fathers in the Roman persecution, who had their hiding-place in a cave, and knew not that it was day save by the dimmer burning of their candles. What wonder that multitudes of our people are ignorant, narrow, superstitious? What wonder?"

Here Mordecai, whose seat was next the fireplace, rose and leaned his arm on the little shelf; his excitement had risen, though his voice, which had begun with unusual strength, was getting hoarser.

"What wonder? The night is unto them, that they have no vision; in their darkness they are unable to divine; the sun is gone down over the prophets, and the day is dark above them; their observances are as nameless relics. But which among the chief of the Gentile nations has not an ignorant multitude? They scorn our people's ignorant observance; but the most accursed ignorance is that which has no observance, — sunk

to the cunning greed of the fox, to which all law is no more than a trap or the cry of the worrying hound. There is a degradation deep down below the memory that has withered into superstition. In the multitudes of the ignorant on three continents who observe our rites and make the confession of the divine Unity, the soul of Judaism is not dead. Revive the organic centre: let the unity of Israel which has made the growth and form of its religion be an outward reality. Looking towards a land and a polity, our dispersed people in all the ends of the earth may share the dignity of a national life which has a voice among the peoples of the East and the West, — which will plant the wisdom and skill of our race so that it may be, as of old, a medium of transmission and understanding. Let that come to pass, and the living warmth will spread to the weak extremities of Israel, and superstition will vanish, not in the lawlessness of the renegade, but in the illumination of great facts which widen feeling, and make all knowledge alive as the young offspring of beloved memories."

Mordecai's voice had sunk, but with the hectic brilliancy of his gaze it was not the less impressive. His extraordinary excitement was certainly due to Deronda's presence: it was to Deronda that he was speaking, and the moment had a testamentary solemnity for him, which rallied all his powers. Yet the presence of those other familiar men promoted expression, for they embodied the indifference which gave a resistant energy to his speech. Not that he looked at Deronda: he seemed to see nothing immediately around him, and if any one had grasped

him he would probably not have known it. Again the former words came back to Deronda's mind: "You must hope my hopes — see the vision I point to — behold a glory where I behold it." They came now with gathered pathos. Before him stood, as a living, suffering reality, what hitherto he had only seen as an effort of imagination, which, in its comparative faintness, yet carried a suspicion of being exaggerated: a man steeped in poverty and obscurity weakened by disease, consciously within the shadow of advancing death, but living an intense life in an invisible past and future, careless of his personal lot, except for its possibly making some obstruction to a conceived good which he would never share except as a brief inward vision, — a day afar off, whose sun would never warm him, but into which he threw his soul's desire, with a passion often wanting to the personal motives of healthy youth. It was something more than a grandiose transfiguration of the parental love that toils, renounces, endures, resists the suicidal promptings of despair, — all because of the little ones, whose future becomes present to the yearning gaze of anxiety.

All eyes were fixed on Mordecai as he sat down again, and none with unkindness: but it happened that the one who felt the most kindly was the most prompted to speak in opposition. This was the genial and rational Gideon, who also was not without a sense that he was addressing the guest of the evening. He said, —

"You have your own way of looking at things, Mordecai, and, as you say, your own way seems to you rational. I know you don't hold with the

restoration to Judæa by miracle, and so on; but you are as well aware as I am that the subject has been mixed with a heap of nonsense both by Jews and Christians. And as to the connection of our race with Palestine, it has been perverted by superstition till it 's as demoralizing as the old poor-law. The raff and scum go there to be maintained like able-bodied paupers, and to be taken special care of by the angel Gabriel when they die. It 's no use fighting against facts. We must look where they point: that 's what I call rationality. The most learned and liberal men among us who are attached to our religion are for clearing our liturgy of all such notions as a literal fulfilment of the prophecies about restoration, and so on. Prune it of a few useless rites and literal interpretations of that sort, and our religion is the simplest of all religions, and makes no barrier, but a union, between us and the rest of the world."

"As plain as a pike-staff," said Pash, with an ironical laugh. "You pluck it up by the roots, strip off the leaves and bark, shave off the knots, and smooth it at top and bottom; put it where you will, it will do no harm, it will never sprout. You may make a handle of it, or you may throw it on the bonfire of scoured rubbish. I don't see why our rubbish is to be held sacred any more than the rubbish of Brahmanism or Bouddhism."

"No," said Mordecai, "no, Pash, because you have lost the heart of the Jew. Community was felt before it was called good. I praise no superstition, I praise the living fountains of enlarging belief. What is growth, completion, development? You began with that question, I apply,

it to the history of our people. I say that the effect of our separateness will not be completed and have its highest transformation unless our race takes on again the character of a nationality. That is the fulfilment of the religious trust that moulded them into a people, whose life has made half the inspiration of the world. What is it to me that the ten tribes are lost untraceably, or that multitudes of the children of Judah have mixed themselves with the Gentile populations as a river with rivers? Behold our people still! Their skirts spread afar; they are torn and soiled and trodden on; but there is a jewelled breastplate. Let the wealthy men, the monarchs of commerce, the learned in all knowledge, the skilful in all arts, the speakers, the political counsellors, who carry in their veins the Hebrew blood which has maintained its vigour in all climates, and the pliancy of the Hebrew genius for which difficulty means new device, — let them say, 'We will lift up a standard, we will unite in a labour hard but glorious like that of Moses and Ezra, a labour which shall be a worthy fruit of the long anguish whereby our fathers maintained their separateness, refusing the ease of falsehood.' They have wealth enough to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors; they have the skill of the statesman to devise, the tongue of the orator to persuade. And is there no prophet or poet among us to make the ears of Christian Europe tingle with shame at the hideous obloquy of Christian strife which the Turk gazes at as at the fighting of beasts to which he has lent an arena? There is store of wisdom among us to found a new Jewish polity,

grand, simple, just, like the old, — a republic where there is equality of protection, an equality which shone like a star on the forehead of our ancient community, and gave it more than the brightness of Western freedom amid the despotisms of the East. Then our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute; the outraged Jew shall have a defence in the court of nations, as the outraged Englishman or American. And the world will gain as Israel gains. For there will be a community in the van of the East which carries the culture and the sympathies of every great nation in its bosom; there will be a land set for a halting-place of enmities, a neutral ground for the East as Belgium is for the West. Difficulties? I know there are difficulties. But let the spirit of sublime achievement move in the great among our people, and the work will begin."

"Ay, we may safely admit that, Mordecai," said Pash. "When there are great men on 'Change, and high-flying professors converted to your doctrine, difficulties will vanish like smoke."

Deronda, inclined by nature to take the side of those on whom the arrows of scorn were falling, could not help replying to Pash's outfling, and said, —

"If we look back to the history of efforts which have made great changes, it is astonishing how many of them seemed hopeless to those who looked on in the beginning. Take what we have all heard and seen something of, — the effort after the unity of Italy, which we are sure soon to see accomplished to the very last boundary.

Look into Mazzini's account of his first yearning, when he was a boy, after a restored greatness and a new freedom to Italy, and of his first efforts as a young man to rouse the same feelings in other young men, and get them to work towards a united nationality. Almost everything seemed against him: his countrymen were ignorant or indifferent, governments hostile, Europe incredulous. Of course the scorners often seemed wise. Yet you see the prophecy lay with him. As long as there is a remnant of national consciousness, I suppose nobody will deny that there may be a new stirring of memories and hopes which may inspire arduous action."

"Amen," said Mordecai, to whom Deronda's words were a cordial. "What is needed is the leaven, — what is needed is the seed of fire. The heritage of Israel is beating in the pulses of millions; it lives in their veins as a power without understanding, like the morning exultation of herds; it is the inborn half of memory, moving as in a dream among writings on the walls, which it sees dimly but cannot divide into speech. Let the torch of visible community be lit! Let the reason of Israel disclose itself in a great outward deed, and let there be another great migration, another choosing of Israel to be a nationality whose members may still stretch to the ends of the earth, even as the sons of England and Germany, whom enterprise carries afar, but who still have a national hearth and a tribunal of national opinion. Will any say 'It cannot be'? Baruch Spinoza had not a faithful Jewish heart, though he had sucked the life of his intellect at

the breasts of Jewish tradition. He laid bare his father's nakedness and said, 'They who scorn him have the higher wisdom.' Yet Baruch Spinoza confessed, he saw not why Israel should not again be a chosen nation. Who says that the history and literature of our race are dead? Are they not as living as the history and literature of Greece and Rome, which have inspired revolutions, enkindled the thought of Europe, and made the unrighteous powers tremble? These were an inheritance dug from the tomb. Ours is an inheritance that has never ceased to quiver in millions of human frames."

Mordecai had stretched his arms upward, and his long thin hands quivered in the air for a moment after he had ceased to speak. Gideon was certainly a little moved, for though there was no long pause before he made a remark in objection, his tone was more mild and deprecatory than before; Pash, meanwhile, pressing his lips together, rubbing his black head with both his hands, and wrinkling his brow horizontally, with the expression of one who differs from every speaker, but does not think it worth while to say so. There is a sort of human paste that when it comes near the fire of enthusiasm is only baked into harder shape.

"It may seem well enough on one side to make so much of our memories and inheritance as you do, Mordecai," said Gideon; "but there 's another side. It is n't all gratitude and harmless glory. Our people have inherited a good deal of hatred. There 's a pretty lot of curses still flying about, and stiff settled rancour inherited from the times of persecution. How will you

justify keeping one sort of memory and throwing away the other? There are ugly debts standing on both sides."

"I justify the choice as all other choice is justified," said Mordecai. "I cherish nothing for the Jewish nation, I seek nothing for them, but the good which promises good to all the nations. The spirit of our religious life, which is one with our national life, is not hatred of aught but wrong. The Masters have said, an offence against man is worse than an offence against God. But what wonder if there is hatred in the breasts of Jews, who are children of the ignorant and oppressed, — what wonder, since there is hatred in the breasts of Christians? Our national life was a growing light. Let the central fire be kindled again, and the light will reach afar. The degraded and scorned of our race will learn to think of their sacred land, not as a place for saintly beggary to await death in loathsome idleness, but as a republic where the Jewish spirit manifests itself in a new order founded on the old, purified, enriched by the experience our greatest sons have gathered from the life of the ages. How long is it? — only two centuries since a vessel carried over the ocean the beginning of the great North American nation. The people grew like meeting waters, — they were various in habit and sect, — there came a time, a century ago, when they needed a polity, and there were heroes of peace among them. What had they to form a polity with but memories of Europe, corrected by the vision of a better? Let our wise and wealthy show themselves heroes. They have the memories of the East and West,

and they have the full vision of a better. A new Persia with a purified religion magnified itself in art and wisdom. So will a new Judæa, poised between East and West, — a covenant of reconciliation. Will any say, the prophetic vision of your race has been hopelessly mixed with folly and bigotry; the angel of progress has no message for Judaism, — it is a half-buried city for the paid workers to lay open, — the waters are rushing by it as a forsaken field? I say that the strongest principle of growth lies in human choice. The sons of Judah have to choose that God may again choose them. The Messianic time is the time when Israel shall will the planting of the national ensign. The Nile overflowed and rushed onward: the Egyptian could not choose the overflow, but he chose to work and make channels for the fructifying waters, and Egypt became the land of corn. Shall man, whose soul is set in the royalty of discernment and resolve, deny his rank and say, I am an onlooker, ask no choice or purpose of me? That is the blasphemy of this time. The divine principle of our race is action, choice, resolved memory. Let us contradict the blasphemy, and help to will our own better future and the better future of the world, — not renounce our higher gift and say, 'Let us be as if we were not among the populations,' but choose our full heritage, claim the brotherhood of our nation, and carry into it a new brotherhood with the nations of the Gentiles. The vision is there; it will be fulfilled."

With the last sentence, which was no more than a loud whisper, Mordecai let his chin sink

on his breast and his eyelids fall. No one spoke. It was not the first time that he had insisted on the same ideas, but he was seen to-night in a new phase. The quiet tenacity of his ordinary self differed as much from his present exaltation of mood as a man in private talk, giving reasons for a revolution of which no sign is discernible, differs from one who feels himself an agent in a revolution begun. The dawn of fulfilment brought to his hope by Deronda's presence had wrought Mordecai's conception into a state of impassioned conviction, and he had found strength in his excitement to pour forth the unlocked floods of emotive argument, with a sense of haste as at a crisis which must be seized. But now there had come with the quiescence of fatigue a sort of thankful wonder that he had spoken, — a contemplation of his life as a journey which had come at last to this bourne. After a great excitement, the ebbing strength of impulse is apt to leave us in this aloofness from our active self. And in the moments after Mordecai had sunk his head, his mind was wandering along the paths of his youth, and all the hopes which had ended in bringing him hither.

Every one felt that the talk was ended, and the tone of phlegmatic discussion made unseasonable, by Mordecai's high-pitched solemnity. It was as if they had come together to hear the blowing of the *shophar*, and had nothing to do now but to disperse. The movement was unusually general, and in less than ten minutes the room was empty of all except Mordecai and Deronda. "Good-nights" had

been given to Mordecai, but it was evident he had not heard them, for he remained rapt and motionless. Deronda would not disturb this needful rest, but waited for a spontaneous movement.

CHAPTER III

My spirit is too weak; mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.

KEATS.

AFTER a few minutes the unwonted stillness had penetrated Mordecai's consciousness, and he looked up at Deronda, not in the least with bewilderment and surprise, but with a gaze full of reposing satisfaction. Deronda rose and placed his chair nearer, where there could be no imagined need for raising the voice. Mordecai felt the action as a patient feels the gentleness that eases his pillow. He began to speak in a low tone, as if he were only thinking articulately, not trying to reach an audience.

"In the doctrine of the Cabala, souls are born again and again in new bodies till they are perfected and purified, and a soul liberated from a worn-out body may join the fellow-soul that needs it, that they may be perfected together, and their earthly work accomplished. Then they will depart from the mortal region, and leave place for new souls to be born out of the store in the eternal bosom. It is the lingering imperfection of the souls already born into the mortal region that hinders the birth of new souls and the preparation of the Messianic time: thus the mind has given shape to what is hidden, as the shadow of what is known, and has spoken

truth, though it were only in parable. When my long-wandering soul is liberated from this weary body, it will join yours, and its work will be perfected."

Mordecai's pause seemed an appeal which Deronda's feeling would not let him leave unanswered. He tried to make it truthful; but for Mordecai's ear it was inevitably filled with unspoken meanings. He only said, —

"Everything I can in conscience do to make your life effective I will do."

"I know it," said Mordecai, in the tone of quiet certainty which dispenses with further assurance. "I heard it. You see it all, — you are by my side on the mount of vision, and behold the paths of fulfilment which others deny."

He was silent a moment or two, and then went on meditatively, —

"You will take up my life where it was broken. I feel myself back in that day when my life was broken. The bright morning sun was on the quay — it was at Trieste — the garments of men from all nations shone like jewels — the boats were pushing off — the Greek vessel that would land us at Beyrout was to start in an hour. I was going with a merchant as his clerk and companion. I said, I shall behold the lands and people of the East, and I shall speak with a fuller vision. I breathed then as you do, without labour; I had the light step and the endurance of youth; I could fast, I could sleep on the hard ground. I had wedded poverty, and I loved my bride — for poverty to me was freedom. My heart exulted as if it had

been the heart of Moses ben Maimon, strong with the strength of threescore years, and knowing the work that was to fill them. It was the first time I had been south: the soul within me felt its former sun; and standing on the quay, where the ground I stood on seemed to send forth light, and the shadows had an azure glory as of spirits become visible, I felt myself in the flood of a glorious life, wherein my own small year-counted existence seemed to melt, so that I knew it not; and a great sob arose within me as at the rush of waters that were too strong a bliss. So I stood there awaiting my companion; and I saw him not till he said: 'Ezra, I have been to the post and there is your letter.'"

"Ezra!" exclaimed Deronda, unable to contain himself.

"Ezra," repeated Mordecai, affirmatively, engrossed in memory. "I was expecting a letter; for I wrote continually to my mother. And that sound of my name was like the touch of a wand that recalled me to the body wherefrom I had been released as it were to mingle with the ocean of human existence, free from the pressure of individual bondage. I opened the letter; and the name came again as a cry that would have disturbed me in the bosom of heaven, and made me yearn to reach where that sorrow was, — 'Ezra, my son!'"

Mordecai paused again, his imagination arrested by the grasp of that long-past moment. Deronda's mind was almost breathlessly suspended on what was coming. A strange possibility had suddenly presented itself. Mordecai's

eyes were cast down in abstracted contemplation, and in a few moments he went on, —

"She was a mother of whom it might have come, — yea, might have come to be said, 'Her children arise up and call her blessed.' In her I understood the meaning of that Master who, perceiving the footsteps of his mother, rose up and said, 'The majesty of the Eternal cometh near!' And that letter was her cry from the depths of anguish and desolation — the cry of a mother robbed of her little one. I was her eldest. Death had taken four babes, one after the other. Then came late my little sister, who was more than all the rest the desire of her mother's eyes; and the letter was a piercing cry to me, — 'Ezra, my son, I am robbed of her. He has taken her away and left disgrace behind. They will never come again.'" — Here Mordecai lifted his eyes suddenly, laid his hand on Deronda's arm, and said: "Mine was the lot of Israel. For the sin of the father my soul must go into exile. For the sin of the father the work was broken, and the day of fulfilment delayed. She who bore me was desolate, disgraced, destitute. I turned back. On the instant I turned, — her spirit, and the spirit of her fathers, who had worthy Jewish hearts, moved within me, and drew me. God, in whom dwells the universe, was within me as the strength of obedience. I turned and travelled with hardship — to save the scant money which she would need. I left the sunshine, and travelled into freezing cold. In the last stage I spent a night in exposure to cold and snow. And that was the beginning of this slow death."

Mordecai let his eyes wander again, and removed his hand. Deronda resolutely repressed the questions which urged themselves within him. While Mordecai was in this state of emotion, no other confidence must be sought than what came spontaneously: nay, he himself felt a kindred emotion which made him dread his own speech as too momentous.

"But I worked. We were destitute — everything had been seized. And she was ill: the clutch of anguish was too strong for her, and wrought with some lurking disease. At times she could not stand for the beating of her heart, and the images in her brain became as chambers of terror, where she beheld my sister reared in evil. In the dead of night I head her crying for her child. Then I rose, and we stretched forth our arms together and prayed. We poured forth our souls in desire that Mirah might be delivered from evil."

"Mirah?" Deronda repeated, wishing to assure himself that his ears had not been deceived by a forecasting imagination. "Did you say Mirah?"

"That was my little sister's name. After we had prayed for her my mother would rest awhile. It lasted hardly four years, and in the minutes before she died, we were praying the same prayer, — I aloud, she silently. Her soul went out upon its wings."

"Have you never since heard of your sister?" said Deronda, as quietly as he could.

"Never. Never have I heard whether she was delivered according to our prayer. I know not, I know not. Who shall say where the path-

ways lie? The poisonous will of the wicked is strong. It poisoned my life — it is slowly stifling this breath. Death delivered my mother, and I felt it a blessedness that I was alone in the winters of suffering. But what are the winters now? — they are far off " — here Mordecai again rested his hand on Deronda's arm, and looked at him with that joy of the hectic patient which pierces us to sadness, — " there is nothing to wail in the withering of my body. The work will be the better done. Once I said, the work of this beginning is mine, I am born to do it. Well, I shall do it. I shall live in you. I shall live in you."

His grasp had become convulsive in its force; and Deronda, agitated as he had never been before, — the certainty that this was Mirah's brother suffusing his own strange relation to Mordecai with a new solemnity and tenderness, — felt his strong young heart beating faster and his lips paling. He shrank from speech. He feared, in Mordecai's present state of exaltation (already an alarming strain on his feeble frame), to utter a word of revelation about Mirah. He feared to make an answer below that high pitch of expectation which resembled a flash from a dying fire, making watchers fear to see it dying the faster. His dominant impulse was to do as he had once done before: he laid his firm gentle hand on the hand that grasped him. Mordecai's, as if it had a soul of its own, — for he was not distinctly willing to do what he did, — relaxed its grasp, and turned upward under Deronda's. As the two palms met and pressed each other, Mordecai

recovered some sense of his surroundings and said, —

"Let us go now. I cannot talk any longer."

And in fact they parted at Cohen's door without having spoken to each other again, — merely with another pressure of the hands.

Deronda felt a weight on him which was half joy, half anxiety. The joy of finding in Mirah's brother a nature even more than worthy of that relation to her, had the weight of solemnity and sadness: the reunion of brother and sister was in reality the first stage of a supreme parting, — like that farewell kiss which resembles greeting, that last glance of love which becomes the sharpest pang of sorrow. Then there was the weight of anxiety about the revelation of the fact on both sides, and the arrangements it would be desirable to make beforehand. I suppose we should all have felt as Deronda did, without sinking into snobbishness or the notion that the primal duties of life demand a morning and an evening suit, that it was an admissible desire to free Mirah's first meeting with her brother from all jarring outward conditions. His own sense of deliverance from the dreaded relationship of the other Cohens, notwithstanding their good nature, made him resolve if possible to keep them in the background for Mirah, until her acquaintance with them would be an unmarred rendering of gratitude for any kindness they had shown towards her brother. On all accounts he wished to give Mordecai surroundings not only more suited to his frail bodily condition, but less of a hindrance to easy intercourse, even apart from the decisive prospect of

Mirah's taking up her abode with her brother, and tending him through the precious remnant of his life. In the heroic drama, great recognitions are not encumbered with these details; and certainly Deronda had as reverential an interest in Mordecai and Mirah as he could have had in the offspring of Agamemnon; but he was caring for destinies still moving in the dim streets of our earthly life, not yet lifted among the constellations, and his task presented itself to him as difficult and delicate, especially in persuading Mordecai to change his abode and habits. Concerning Mirah's feeling and resolve he had no doubt: there would be a complete union of sentiment towards the departed mother, and Mirah would understand her brother's greatness. Yes, greatness: that was the word which Deronda now deliberately chose to signify the impression that Mordecai made on him. He said to himself, perhaps rather defiantly towards the more negative spirit within him, that this man, however erratic some of his interpretations might be, — this consumptive Jewish workman in threadbare clothing, lodged by charity, delivering himself to hearers who took his thoughts without attaching more consequences to them than the Flemings to the ethereal chimes ringing above their market-places, — had the chief elements of greatness: a mind consciously, energetically moving with the larger march of human destinies, but not the less full of conscience and tender heart for the footsteps that tread near and need a leaning-place; capable of conceiving and choosing a life's task with far-off issues, yet capable of the unapplauded

heroism which turns off the road of achievement at the call of the nearer duty whose effect lies within the beatings of the hearts that are close to us, as the hunger of the unfledged bird to the breast of its parent.

Deronda to-night was stirred with the feeling that the brief remnant of this fervid life had become his charge. He had been peculiarly wrought on by what he had seen at the club of the friendly indifference which Mordecai must have gone on encountering. His own experience of the small room that ardour can make for itself in ordinary minds had had the effect of increasing his reserve; and while tolerance was the easiest attitude to him, there was another bent in him also capable of becoming a weakness, — the dislike to appear exceptional or to risk an ineffective insistence on his own opinion. But such caution appeared contemptible to him just now, when he for the first time saw in a complete picture and felt as a reality the lives that burn themselves out in solitary enthusiasm: martyrs of obscure circumstance, exiled in the rarity of their own minds, whose deliverances in other ears are no more than a long passionate soliloquy, — unless perhaps at last, when they are nearing the invisible shores, signs of recognition and fulfilment may penetrate the cloud of loneliness; or perhaps it may be with them as with the dying Copernicus made to touch the first printed copy of his book when the sense of touch was gone, seeing it only as a dim object through the deepening dusk.

Deronda had been brought near to one of

those spiritual exiles, and it was in his nature to feel the relation as a strong claim, nay, to feel his imagination moving without repugnance in the direction of Mordecai's desires. With all his latent objection to schemes only definite in their generality and nebulous in detail, — in the poise of his sentiments he felt at one with this man who had made a visionary selection of him: the lines of what may be called their emotional theory touched. He had not the Jewish consciousness, but he had a yearning, grown the stronger for the denial which had been his grievance, after the obligation of avowed filial and social ties. His feeling was ready for difficult obedience. In this way it came that he set about his new task ungrudgingly; and again he thought of Mrs. Meyrick as his chief helper. To her first he must make known the discovery of Mirah's brother, and with her he must consult on all preliminaries of bringing the mutually lost together. Happily the best quarter for a consumptive patient did not lie too far off the small house at Chelsea, and the first office Deronda had to perform for this Hebrew prophet who claimed him as a spirtual inheritor was to get him a healthy lodging. Such is the irony of earthly mixtures, that the heroes have not always had carpets and teacups of their own; and, seen through the open window by the mackerel-vender, may have been invited with some hopefulness to pay three hundred per cent in the form of fourpence. However, Deronda's mind was busy with a prospective arrangement for giving a furnished lodging some faint likeness to a refined home by dismantling his own

chambers of his best old books in vellum, his easiest chair, and the bas-reliefs of Milton and Dante.

But was not Mirah to be there? What furniture can give such finish to a room as a tender woman's face? — and is there any harmony of tints that has such stirrings of delight as the sweet modulations of her voice? Here is one good, at least, thought Deronda, that comes to Mordecai from his having fixed his imagination on me. He has recovered a perfect sister, whose affection is waiting for him.

END OF VOLUME II DANIEL DERONDA

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